LEARNING / F1
Are college admission tests fair?

ACROSS / A19
Fr. Miguel Anselmo Azcona Bernad dies; 91

ENTERTAINMENT / E1
Charice aims for the Grammys

NEWS / A9
Filipinos join Canadian's world trek for peace

SPORTS / A29
Pacquiao 'ready to ditch TV partner' in favor of giant network

Zubiri: Clamor to end VFA spurred Obama call

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jerome Aning

THE CLAMOR FOR THE ABROGATION OF the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) could have prompted US President Barack Obama to finally call President Macapagal-Arroyo to reaffirm ties between the two

[illegible] A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, March 16, 2009 ★ Vol. 24 / No. 98 www.inquirer.net

Meralco-PLDT deal: When losing is winning

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE LOPEZ JIMMY MAY HAVE LOST its grip on Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), but it can hit many birds with one stone because of its new alliance with Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), according to stock analysts.

MERALCO-PLDT A1

China shows might in South China Sea

Gonzales worried by move

By Christian V. Esguerra

CHINA'S DISPATCH OF a state-of-the-art patrol ship in the South China Sea doesn't necessarily smack of gunboat diplomacy, but Malacañang is taking it seriously.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales yesterday said he would call for an immediate meeting of the Cabinet's security group to discuss the Chinese action in the wake of Beijing's protest over the signing of the Philippine Archipelagic Baselines Law.

"The deployment of the patrol ship was a message and we cannot just ignore it," Gonzales told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "We have to take it seriously."

China's state media yesterday reported that the country had dispatched its "most modern patrol ship" in the South China Sea following an incident with a US naval vessel and the signing of the Philippine baselines law.

"This should remind us that

CHINA A11

LIVE-OUT AREA Murder convict Rolito Go (inset) has been transferred to Camp Bukang Liwayway, a minimum security complex of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City. INSET/NOEL

Rolito Go now a live-out inmate

By Marlen Ranoa

CONVICTED RAPE-SLAYER ROLITO Go has been allowed to leave the maximum security complex of the New Bilibid Prison in a move MDP insiders said could pave the way for his eventual release.

Supt. Bartolome Bustamante, Bureau of Corrections executive assistant, confirmed that Go was now a live-out inmate following an order from Director Oscar Calderon based on recommendations of BuCor's classification board.

"He was not the only one who was given this (privilege). There were several others who were transferred from the maximum to medium and minimum security complex," he said over the phone.

However, Calderon told the Inquirer that Go was not a live-out inmate. "He was just given the minimum security classification," he said.

Convicted child rapist and former Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romeo Jalosjos is among the most prison's high-profile inmates who enjoy live-out privilege.

Inquirer sources said Go, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for the fatal shooting of Eldon Maguan in 1991 over a traffic row, was released on Friday from the maximum security compound.

A live-out status is given to inmates who have almost completed their prison terms. They are allowed to walk around the facility without security escorts.

ROLITO A20

Dark horse lacking spectacular record

By Amando Doronila

THE SEARCH FOR A DARK horse in the 2010 presidential election has intensified as recent poll surveys have narrowed the short list of potential front-runners to four, none of whom is identified as allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

ANALYSIS

The path was signaled by Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro's announcement last week of his intention to run for president.

A Pulse Asia survey conducted in February showed that if an election had been held last month, it would have been a "very close race" among four likely candidates—Vice President Noli de Castro, Sen. Francisco Ilocandeo, former President Joseph Estrada and Sen. Manuel Villar.

Escudero and Estrada are identified with the opposition and De Castro's political allegiance is uncertain.

The most significant finding of the survey is that the four were locked in "nearly the same overall preferences," with De Castro at 19 percent, Escudero at 17 percent, Estrada at 16 percent and Villar at 15 percent.

With this slim percentage

DARK A21

Study shows good, bad among hopefuls

By Veli Corderias

TO SOME VOTERS, BASANI Fernando's efforts to ease Metro Manila's traffic and spruce up the streets may be fine, but his choice of park is not.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson's stance as a grafbuster can be his best ticket to Malacañang next year, but his "iron-fisted" image can make some voters think twice.

Whether Sen. Francis Escudero likes it or not, his strongest political assets include being a rock star bokelilia.

STUDY A10

JUNIOR Inquirer writer Ruth Navarra hosts the read-along session for Aeta children in Bataan. ROMY PEREZ

Tales of hard work, family for Aeta kids

By Kate V. Pedroso
Inquirer Research

UNDER THE SHADE OF A mango tree, over a hundred Aeta school children listened to stories about the value of hard work, love for family and caring for Mother Nature during a special Inquirer Read-Along session held on Friday in Barangay Bayan-bayanan, Dinalupihan in Bataan.

The read-along hosted by Junior Inquirer writer Ruth Navarra was held in cooperation with Queen International of Manila.

TALES A12

BACLARAN CHURCH

Mass attendance, petitions swell

By Marolito A. Gonzales
Contributor

(Editor's Note: Times are tough. Let's do something about it. Now. Share with us what you or other people are doing to get you through the rough times. If we are together, we can tough it out. Send suggestions to jnewsweek@inquirer.com.ph)

Project Editor: Jose Clemente Jr.

COPING HOPING

THE TOUGHER THE times, the harder people pray.

At the popular "Our Mother of Perpetual Help" shrine in Baclaran, Parañaque, people attending Wednesday novenas and Sunday Masses often spill over to the courtyard. Churchgoers used to peak at 120,000 on the first Wednesday of the month.

Now crowds fill the church to overflowing even on ordinary Wednesdays and Sundays. (The shrine holds 12 Masses and novenas every Wednesday.)

Prices have risen, but devotees are not scrimping on their

MASS A20

Pineda rouses hometown crowd in show

By Pschelle Concepcion
Entertainment

ARNEL PINEDA DOES NOT HAVE THE smoldering sexuality of a Jim Morrison or the wild sinew of a Mick Jagger onstage.

But on Saturday night, he wore leather pants and prowled like a true rock star as he led Journey in a rousing performance before an audience of 25,000 at the SM Mall of Asia (MOA) open-air grounds in Pasay City.

The concert, part of the Asian leg of the American pop-rock band's current world tour, opened last week in three cities in Japan.

PINEDA A21

FILIPINO vocalist Arnel Pineda performs with lead guitarist Neal Schon in Journey's concert. PHOTOGRAPHS BY

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

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DPWH earmarks P70B for new roads

Not to worry, says dep't exec, anticorruption measures are in place

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS Drivenearth

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE THE INVESTIGATION OF alleged bid rigging in World Bank-funded road projects in the country is going on, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) will spend at least P70 billion this year to build more roads.

But not to worry, said Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. The department has fortified its system and is implementing new measures to stamp out graft in its road projects, he said in a recent anticorruption forum.

A spokesperson for the Philippine Contractors Association (PCA), however, said additional changes would be needed in the country's procurement law to relieve the evaluation jurisdiction of civil works, as well as to encourage more whistleblowers to come forward.

Ebdane, at the forum sponsored by the anticorruption group Bantay Lansangan, said the infrastructure budget this year was around P130 billion, of which 70 percent or some P91 billion would be allocated for roads.

Aside from building new roads, "the biggest challenge is to build them in the most transparent manner," he added.

Long way to go

"I would like to appeal that the department not be spooked in this. You will agree that the Philippines is far behind in infrastructure. We have a long way to go," Ebdane said.

He said the new anticorruption measures, particularly for the National Roads Improvement and Management Program (NRIMP), include using an independent procurement evaluator to "improve transparency in the procurement process." The department has strengthened its internal controls and audit capacity. There are also provisions for "independent oversight" of the management of public works funds by civil society groups like Bantay Lansangan and a multisectoral Road Board, he said.

Investigating WB charges

Ebdane said the DPWH was investigating three Filipino contractors who were blacklisted by the World Bank for allegedly violating bidding rules.

"We're in the process of conducting our own investigation and we're looking at where the deputies' probably had lapses in the procedures," he said.

Lito Madrasto, PCA executive director, who also participated in the anticorruption forum, said the World Bank must do more to put in "proper perspective."

He said the alleged anomalies happened in 2003-2004.

He agreed with Ebdane that needed reforms had been put in place in the DPWH to avoid a repeat of what happened.

"A lot of these things happened years ago. Let us put them in the proper perspective," Madrasto said.

But he also called for changes in the Government Procurement Reform Act or Republic Act No. 9184.

3 Filipino seamen seized in Cameroon

LAGOS—GUNMEN ATTACKED AN OIL supply vessel contracted to Royal Dutch Shell off Cameroon near its border with Nigeria on Thursday, in the latest incident kidnapping three Filipino and one Ukrainian crew, security sources said.

Two security contractors and some 30 suspected Nigerian militants in speedboats attacked the 900 DWT Hua in the early hours of Saturday about 14 km from the coast of Bakassi on the Nigeria-Cameroon border.

"Several live shots were fired. One person was injured and they got the three Filipinos and the Ukrainian," one of the sources said.

Both sources said the attack happened in Cameroonian waters. One said the vessel was under Cameroonian naval escort.

Spokespersons for the Nigerian navy and for the military task force patrolling Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta said they had no immediate details. Reuters

TXT iNGO WINNING NUMBERS FOR MARCH 15, 2009: 18 52 72 51 09 JACKPOT: P10,192,638.68

PSE to allow anonymous stock trades

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) has set new rules allowing brokerages to trade anonymously in a bid to attract more foreign investors and boost liquidity in the local equities market.

But the move, which comes as countries around the world pursue aggressive regulation of financial markets and institutions after the global credit crisis exposed weaknesses in the financial system, raised concern that local trading would become less transparent.

In a statement, PSE president Francis Lim said the new policy would align local trading activities with global best practices as a number of developed markets like the United States, Japan and Australia had adopted the practice of broker anonymity.

The policy was also in place in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, China and Korea, Lim said.

Under the current system, brokers involved in matched transactions are identified through their codes on the PSE trading screens.

Lim said the practice impeded the flow of transactions as some big trades drew unwanted attention, encouraging brokers to undervalue trades outside the market.

"Contrary to perceptions that taking out the broker identifier is a disservice to market players because it reduces transparency, broker anonymity actually promotes fairness and affords investors deeper market depth and liquidity," he said.

Lim said the PSE's surveillance departments would continue to have access to broker identity data in case of a need to investigate or monitor illegal trading activity.

Lim said that with the new policy, purchases would be disclosed only if the transactions triggered limits prescribed under existing house rules. Reuters

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celebrity favorites

The dish on some celebrity skin secrets: Find out what skin problems they used to have – and the solutions they really did to get rid of them!

How she got rid of the early age signs, aegs and wrinkles: "I love **ReFirme!** When I first tried it, they treated one half of my face so I could see the difference. After treatment, I immediately noticed that my laugh lines disappeared, and the skin around my eyes slightly lifted." – Agot Isidro-Sandejas

How she lost the post-pregnancy freckles and oily skin: "When I had my third kid, I got some age spots. After trying **Intense Pulsed Light** (IPL) only once, I felt na nag-lighten yung skin ko, and nag-fade yung age spots. My pores are now less visible, and my skin looks finer and smoother." – Donna Cruz-Lamaestre

How she rejuvenates dull skin from stress: "The best facial I've had is the **Vita Spa.** And I've tried facials abroad! I've gone to many salons and derm clinics but none have been as thorough as the Vita Spa. This 'spa in a facial' works well in removing my dark spots. It's pretty relaxing too! – Mindy Weber-Bautista

How she cleared her skin of wrinkles and laugh lines: "I always believe in aging gracefully. So I'm glad I found something that helps me do so without having to battle with it but work along with it instead. I found that in **Renew by Affirm.** 20 minutes is all it takes to make my skin feel that it's on it's way to looking better and as it should." – Cherie Gil

How she fights the effects of sun damage: "I noticed that as I got older, my pores seemed to be more obvious and my skin appeared dull due to sun damage. Regular **Diamond Peel** treatments are essential to all these imperfections." – Amina Aranas-Munsh

ReFirme, IPL, Vita Spa, Diamond Peel and Renew are all available at Facial Care Centre. For a FREE private consultation, call 892-SKIN (7546), Cebu (233-7601/33/30) or Pampanga (963-3494/88).

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Meralco-PLDT deal

From page A1

The decision of the Lopezes to sell most of its stake in Meralco to the PLDT group after controlling the utility for decades is expected to reduce the family's exposure to political heat and allow its conglomerate to raise funds to pare down debts given a tough economic environment.

There are on top of building financial muscle amid frozen lenders' exit or tougher deals from Manny Pangilinan's group of firms hostile takeover of Meralco by the dwindling fund and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

After the sale of a 20-percent stake in Meralco, the Lopez group plans to eliminate P500 million in outstanding debts. But this still has to go through deliberations, said Benjamin Lopez, a son of Lopez patriarch Oscar Lopez and vice president of First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPH).

Lopez did not rule out the possibility of the group forging a partnership with PLDT in other businesses. "[We] also subject to further discussions," he told the Inquirer yesterday.

After selling part of its stake in Meralco, the Lopez family is still left with three publicly listed entities: power firm ABS CBN Broadcasting Corp., power producer First Gen Corp. (First Gen) and geothermal power producer Energy Development Corp. (EDC).

Asked about possible synergies with another Lopez firm, Bayan Telecommunications Inc. (Bayantel), PLDT director Ray Espinosa said: "There will always be synergies between the two but right now we are focused on Meralco given the level of our investment and we would want to work on the significant synergy opportunities we have so far identified."

Meralco is the largest distributor of electricity in the Philippines. Its service area covers 9,337 square kilometers, where approximately a quarter of the country's population resides.

It also operates a fiber optic network of more than 1,000 kilometers and provides leased-line connections, data networking solutions and disaster recovery transport services.

Industry sources said the Lopez family had been in talks with the group of PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan for a potential deal in Meralco since October last year, even before San Miguel bagged the 27-percent stake held by the nationalized Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

Sources said the biggest motivation for the Lopezes was to raise money and not really to recruit a white knight against San Miguel.

"If they only wanted to block San Miguel, the sale of a 20.1 percent stake to PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund (BTF) would have been enough. Why did they have to sell an additional 20 percent?" one industry source said. "It's because they really need the money."

The Lopez group sold four year to interest in Manila South Tollways Corp., operator of North Luzon Expressway, to Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), which is part of a group led by Pangilinan.

MPIC, the listed holding company of the Salim family's Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co., likewise bought Avle-ridden water concessionaire Manila Water Services Inc. from the Lopezes.

The sources also claimed that it was the Lopez duo—though Meralco chair Manolo Lopez—that produced San Miguel as suitor to the utility in the first place.

The Lopezes were then under the Erap (GSIS) presidency of Winston Garcia, who sensed the family of mismanaging Meralco and of hoping power supply economics favorable to their power generation businesses.

Somewhere along the way, however, tension escalated between the Lopez and San Miguel groups, leading to enmity over San Miguel's growing interest in Meralco and political clout could have led the Lopezes to a quite such Pangilinan's group as a white knight to Meralco.

The deal forged last week would allow Pangilinan's group—via Philippine Telephone Corp.'s wireless unit, MPIC—to control 30.2 per cent of Meralco, thus boosting the single biggest voting bloc in the power retailer.

The Lopezes' FPH will get a total of about P20 billion for the sale of its 20-percent stake (at P90 per share) to ay before Aug. 16.

First Pacific, which has a 97.1-percent interest in MPIC, said "there is significant potential for the split in the value of Meralco as its business develops along with the growth of the Philippine economy."

MPIC, the flagship firm of First Pacific in the Philippines, has holdings in infrastructure, utilities and health care enterprises.

First Pacific expects synergy

In a recent statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, First Pacific said that by acquiring a stronger interest, it would be able to benefit from the synergies that exist between PLDT and Meralco.

"It is also anticipated that there will be significant synergies with other infrastructure assets currently owned by MPIC," First Pacific said.

Pangilinan is also managing director and chief executive of First Pacific, which holds 26.4 percent of the voting control of PLDT and is its single largest shareholder.

PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund, which recently acquired 10.17 percent or one billion shares in Meralco, has agreed to sell its entire interest in the utility firm to MPIC for cash.

Stock analysts are unanimous in saying that the biggest winner in the deal is the Lopez group.

"The Lopez group may have lost its control of Meralco, but it has gained enough investment to maintain its debt issues, partnered with two of the biggest companies in the country that have strong balance sheets, and nothing else to the portfolio was sacrificed," said Jose Mari Lanuza, head of research at stock brokerage Campos Lanuza & Co.

Lanuza said the strategy for the control group appeared to be one of survival with Lopez surrendering pride or dignity "Selling Meralco to the PLDT group First Pacific may have been more acceptable than to surrendering to GSIS as the undisputed" meeting, "he said..

While San Miguel has acquired the 27 percent voting rights of the GSIS, the shares should remain under the name of the state-owned pension fund until the block (worth about P36.7 billion at P90 per share) watfully paid in three years.

On the other hand, the Lopez group shall be paid at the same price in cash up front.

Furthermore, the stake sale should alleviate advisory concerns for the entire group in the proceeds could be used to reduce the parent company's debt of P71.7 billion, or to refinance subsidiary First Gen's P33.06 billion debt that will mature this May," Tan said.

Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investments officer of the stock brokerage ING, said the deal would strengthen the financial position of FPH and ease investors' concern on its subsidiaries' refinancing risks.

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OFWs call on Japan gov't to let Pinoy couple stay

By Jerome Aning

AN ALLIANCE OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers yesterday appealed to the Japanese government not to deport a Filipino couple feared to have entered Japan using fake passports 17 years ago.

Migrante International called for voice to prosper in the Philippines and in Japan reconcile the deportation of Arlan and Imelda Calderon because it would mean separating them from their 12-year-old daughter Nerilee, a Japanese citizen.

The Calderons are scheduled to leave Japan on April 13 and will leave Nerilee—who was born in Japan and speaks only Japanese—in the care of friends until she finishes high school.

Nerilee is set to begin her second year in high school in Minami City, Saitama Prefecture, on April 9.

Japan's Supreme Court rejected the couple's appeal to be allowed to stay in Japan last September.

Migrante described the treatment of the family as "ruthless" and called on the Philippine government to take a firm stand in the controversy.

"What a sad testament to the abnormalities of basic human rights in Japan," Migrante chair Garry Martinez said in a statement. "The deportation is 'totally inhuman' to the best interests of the child and is 'a direct and deliberate act to destroy a family,'" he said.

Asia signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Japan has an obligation to provide ample protection to the child, including the right to live with his or her family.

"We would like to express our support to the Calderon family and add our voices to the growing chorus to keep the family together in Japan," Martinez said.

Under these circumstances, the group's chairperson Bruce Wee said Nerilee's parents would be allowed to make short visits to back to the country to visit their daughter despite a five-year ban in deportation cases.

Arlan came to Japan in May 1991; a year after his wife did. Both entered the country using other people's passports and stayed undocumented. Their daughter was born in 1995.

Martinez said the Calderons case followed a trend now affecting many irregular migrants all over the world. Last year, Greece and Malaysia conducted forced deportations of undocumented aliens that were "violent and merciless."

The European Union and United States are the compelling regimes in migration laws.

What had ratified the "valuable contributions" made by migrants to the development of their host countries "tended to be of an overexposure" in the face of such actions.

Philippine immigration authorities are likewise taking a hard line against illegal immigrants. More foreigners held at local immigration jails have complained of human rights abuses.

Resado's account still frozen

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS EXTENDED the freeze order on the two bank accounts of Jetro prosecutor Julia Resado by 20 days.

The Anti-Money Laundering Council sought the extension from March 18 to April 17 because it had not completed its investigation of Resado's accounts with Banco De Oro in Binondo, Manila, and at PS Bank on Padre Faura Street, Manila.

The appellate court on Feb. 26 ordered a freeze on the two accounts and all related accounts for a period of 20 days. The freeze was due to expire on March 17.

Resado was linked earlier this year to allegations that prosecutors took a cash bribe from some Taiwanese in exchange for the dismissal of drug charges against three scions of wealthy families who were accused to help their operations in September 2008.

The freeze order on Resado's bank accounts was issued so they could be investigated in relation to unlawful activities under the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The court said the freeze order was needed to prevent any transaction, removal, concealment, conversion or movement of the accounts pending their investigation.

Resado's account opening in the front of the controversy when the Department of Justice and National Bureau of Investigation received an anonymous letter about a deposit of at least P800,000 made to Resado's account in Banco.

The letter signed by "Juan Dela Cruz" said the money was deposited in Resado's account a day before the drug bust that came up with a resolution dismissing the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's drug charges against the so-called Alabang Boys—Richard Brodett, Jorge Joseph and Joseph Torres. *Norman Bordadora*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 16, 2009
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading 2 Kgs 5: 1-15b
Gospel Lk 4: 24-30

Jesus added, "No prophet is accepted in his own country. Truly I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens withheld rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land. Yet Elijah was sent not to any of them, but to a widow at Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and not one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian."

On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. They rose up and drove him out of the town, to the edge of the hill on which the town was built, intending to throw him down the cliff. But he passed through their midst and went his way.

Commentary:

"No prophet is honored in his own country." This happened in Jesus when he preached this: *The people were pleased to throw Jesus down the cliff. There are two possible reasons why the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus, considering that he was given up these days.* The people are a reminder of what in the past. *Imagine* how could a son of a carpenter can teach and preach these words to them. Second, they are so self-centered and their self-interest does not agree that God's Kingdom and God's love is for everyone, so they tried to murdered them what God's kingdom is for everyone is their self-centeredness.

When Jesus continues to be humble and pride and not our pride to overcome us. If we are humble enough to welcome His words in our hearts, it will become for us to let Jesus enter our lives. At the same time if we have Jesus in our lives, we become generous to share Him to others who are tired in needful Wisdom.

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RP earns WHO's 'cautious praise' for resurgent measles cases

By Norman Bordadora

THE WORLD HEALTH Organization (WHO) has lowered 'cautious praise' on the Philippines after measles mass and low-level immunization initiated in December 2006 following a two and a half year period of no cases due to the government's tight fight (left) from Measles campaign.

Citing the journal, Tropical Disease, the WHO said measles cases in the country decreased by 96 percent and deaths due to the disease declined by 99 percent in the immediate aftermath of the Department of Health's (DoH) campaign that began in 2004. Original Source is published in the United Kingdom.

Into months deaths, the publication said, send a "historic first" for the Philippines.

The source of the disease, however, in December 2006 prompted the WHO to add caution to its acclaim.

"The Service officials of Philippine health workers under the leadership of the current and previous secretaries of health, Dr. Francisco Duque III and Dr. Manuel Dayrit, has taken the Philippines and the region a long way towards measles elimination," said Dr. Shin Young-soo, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific.

"But this regional success story is to be fully realized and sustained to meet WHO's 2012 measles elimination target for the western Pacific region, the Philippines will need to completely and repeatedly penetrate the pockets of under-vaccinated populations underneath," he said.

The campaign under to vaccinate 18 million children between nine months and eight years of age door to door nationwide.

"The 2004 campaign brought the Philippines closer to measles elimination," said Dr. Howard Sobel, WHO Philippines medical officer.

"But the results of cases and continued low-level transmission since December 2006 following two and a half years of no gains account only for continued focus on improving routine and campaign vaccination coverage and local government financial commitment to finish the job. Surveillance also needs strengthening to fully identify cases nationwide," he said.

The WHO said an estimated 6,000 Filipino children died from measles in 2005, most of them from poor households that have the least access to public health.

Despite a 95-percent reduction in measles deaths in the Asia-Pacific region, the disease remains a leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths among children, the agency said.

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Per CITU-NCR Permit No. 1217, Series of 2009

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Tourism law seen as boon to beating economic crisis

A TOURISM BILL SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO soften the impact of the global economic crisis on the Philippines is close to becoming law after it was ratified by the Senate before the Lenten break.

Tourism organizations welcomed the passage of the bill which only needs the signature of President Macapagal-Arroyo to become law. A key feature of the measure is the creation of an institutionalized body to oversee a tourism master plan.

The Tourism Act of 2009 is a consolidation of House Bill No. 5229 sponsored by Rep. Ed Chavez and Senate Bill No. 2213 authored by Sen. Richard Gordon, himself a former secretary of Tourism.

The tourism master plan will map out key areas and develop them into tourism economic zones under the supervision of the Tourism Infrastructure Estate Zone Authority (Tiesa), to be composed of representatives from the private sector and the Department of Tourism.

The zones are projected to create 30 million jobs and generate $18 billion in foreign exchange, Alejandro Clemente, president of the Federation of Tourism Industries of the Philippines (FTIP), told the Inquirer in an interview.

In a position paper, the FTIP said tourism could be an important engine of socioeconomic and cultural growth to generate investments, foreign exchange earnings and employment.

"When the number of tourist arrivals increases, then there will be demand for food and services, it will benefit the agriculture and information technology industries. There will also be a need for farmers to produce the needs of hotels and resorts," Clemente said. Erika Sauler

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PIED PIPER Jean Belbeau (in the middle of the pack) and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim (to the left) lead enthusiastic walkers for peace on Roxas Boulevard yesterday

Filipinos briefly join Canadian's world trek

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE NEED TO CHANGE HIS LIFE DROVE Canadian Jean Belbeau on a solo trek from his home through 35 countries and four continents in the course of eight years. But what started as a journey for self-discovery has become an relentless quest for global peace and the promotion of children's rights.

Belbeau is now walking through his 16th country—the Philippines.

Used to walking alone, he was in Manila yesterday in the midst of a crowd of about 300.

The 53-year-old acknowledged the number of Manila walkers as the biggest he has experienced in his trek so far.

Traveling currently light with a three-wheeled stroller containing his very basic necessities, a first aid kit, a tent and a sleeping bag, yesterday's 3-kilometer symbolic walk in Manila from the Rizal Monument in the Cultural Center of the Philippines to Pasay City near hundreds of Filipinos joining his crusade to spread the message of peace and nonviolence to children.

Belbeau told the Inquirer he had just walked 30 days from Dagupan in Ilocos Norte to Manila. He said it was his first time in the country, remarking in a thick French accent, "You have very lovely people here."

As he walks through different countries, he said, people expressed support for children's rights and his journey has helped raise funds for the promotion of those rights.

On his decision to leave everything, even his family behind, the his remarks, he remarked, "I am doing this for peace. My wife Hazel is a strong lady. My family is very supportive."

On his 1,700-km Philippine trek, Belbeau chose to help Voluntas Foundation in promoting the welfare of street children. The Makati-based organization is one of the largest private, non-sectarian child-care

SELFSELL Calm on cordless before walking

institutions in Metro Manila.

Belbeau has 10 more countries to visit to complete his 75,000-km goal before he walks back to Montreal, Canada, in October 2011, a homecoming after 11 years. He left his country on Aug. 16, 2003.

He walked from Canada to the United States to begin his trek through 35 countries in North and South America, 12 in Africa, and 22 in Europe. Before coming to the Philippines, he walked through South Korea, Japan and Taiwan and will proceed to Australia.

The Canadian's life-changing crusade, aimed at promoting the United Nations' proclamation of 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, has found supporters in all corners of the globe.

As a highlight of yesterday's 3-km walk, participating adults made a pledge to respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice; to reject violence, particularly toward children; to share time and material resources in real injustice and political as well as economic oppression; to defend freedoms of expression and cultural diversity; to promote responsible consumer behavior and development practices; and to contribute to the development of the community and the country.

"This is your walk," a grinning Belbeau addressed the crowd that had gathered around him and made the pledge on the CCP grounds. The short program provided a respite for the Canadian before he continues his journey for peace in Cebu, and then it's on to Australia.

More Pinoys busted

AT LEAST 16 Filipinos have been arrested since January for trying to smuggle drugs into China, Hong Kong and Macau, prompting the Philippine government to renew a warning that traffickers could face the death penalty, an official said Sunday.

Last year, 113 Filipinos, mostly women, were arrested in those destinations for drug-related offenses—a huge jump from the 35 in 2007, Philippine Ambassador to China Sonia Brady said.

Of those taken into custody the last two years, 22 were sentenced to death and 12 to life in prison. Others received short or extensive. Brady said. AP

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Palparan, others escape contempt raps

THE COURT OF APPEALS (CA) DENIED the petition of the families of two missing University of the Philippines youth to cite retired and active military officials in contempt for their failure to immediately release the women from custody.

The appellate court said that while it had ordered respondents retired Generals Jovito Palparan and Romeo Tolentino, Lt. Col. Rogelio Boac, Lt. Francis Mirabelis Samaco and Arnel Enriquez to "immediately release" the two from detention, in order issued on Sept. 18, 2008, was not mandatory.

"The use of the term 'immediately' does not mean that it is automatically mandatory. There is nothing in the rules on the writ of amparo that states that a decision rendered is immediately executory," the appellate court said.

The court added that it could not cite the respondents for contempt due to the absence of a basis since the petitioners' families failed to file a motion for execution pending the appeal of the decision.

"There being no motion, the court could not have issued, and did not issue, a writ of execution. There being no writ of execution, there is no order of this court being violated or ignored by the respondents," the court said.

On Sept. 18, 2008, the appellate court ordered the release of UP students Sherlyn Cadapan and Eleren Empeño from the Armed Forces' custody.

Another petitioner in the case was the family of Jonas Manuel Medez who was believed abducted together with the two students in 2006.

The appellate court in its September 2008 decision said there was sufficient evidence to establish that the Philippine Army was holding the three since they disappeared on June 26, 2006, in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

Norman Bordadora

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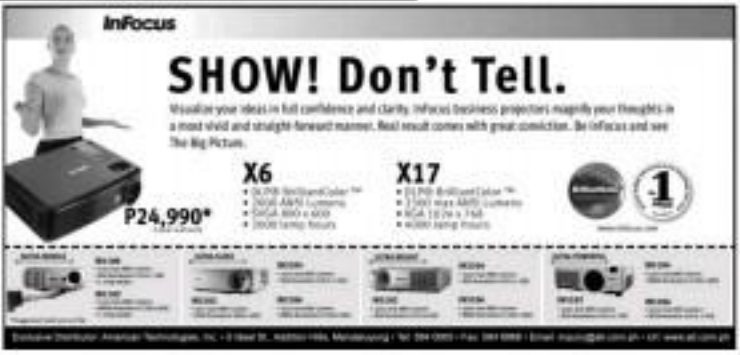
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Day-care center serves Aeta children in Bataan

By Edson C. Tandoc, Jr.

LIMA 1031 (PUBLISH). MARIETTA Dayangi, a 25-year-old Aeta, never had a chance to go to school.

Things are different for her 5-year-old son Mamias. He goes to a small day-care center in the foot of Mount Mabaleshin in the village of Bayan Bayanan in Hermosa, Bataan.

The center functions as a preschool and classroom for Aeta children who attend a nearby public elementary school. It stays open from the long walk from the mountain, as well as the pain of discrimination.

Together with other preschool kids, Mamias stays in the center five days a week and he is taught how to read, write and count. On Friday afternoons, his mother picks him up and they go back home to the mountain.

"I am happy he is able to go to school," Dayangi says.

She laughs as she shares how sometimes, Mamias would refuse to come home with her. "He wants to stay in the center to study."

Teacher dreams

Dayangi says her one dreams of becoming a teacher. Like other villagers, Marcita's duties revolve by harvesting banana flowers in the mountain and selling them in town.

The day-care center is a joint project of the Quota International of Manila, a group of women based in the metropolis, and the Rotary Club of Mabini Bonifacio.

Marlyn San Buenaventura, who is an officer of both groups, grew up in Dinalupihan and knows about the plight of the Aeta people.

They used to stay in the lowland, she says, but when new settlers came, they retreated to the mountains.

Discrimination

"They find it difficult to integrate with society because people always make fun of how they look," she adds.

While public relocations is low, Aeta children travel long distances from their homes to the nearest school, which is about five kilometers away.

Their young legs can endure the long walk, but their young hearts cannot bear the discrimination. They are called "Kalot" because they have curly hair. Their skin is dark. They are also smaller than their classmates.

San Buenaventura told fellow officers about the Aeta people's plight and in December 2008, the day-care center was born.

The Rotary Club International donated money for the building, wooden beds and a TV set. Quota International Manila donated air conditioning units and a deep well. It also pays for the salaries of a preschool teacher and a "house mother," an Aeta who looks after the children.

Education is key

The goal is to provide young Aeta "education as a means to overcome their poverty," San Buenaventura says.

The children also get free meals and school supplies like uniforms and notebooks.

The day-care center gets its inspiration from Aeta community leader, Elvira Pascio, who last year, gave up two rooms in her house for the children to use as classrooms.

For seven months until the center was built, Pascio, her husband and her five children stayed in one room while the students gathered in another room and the sala for their lessons.

Learning Filipino

Today, a total of 36 students (25 grade-school and 11 preschool children) now use the day-care center located 200 meters from the public elementary school in Barangay Bayan-bayanan.

The lessons hold a special Read-Along session for Aeta children on Friday (See story on Page A1.)

San Buenaventura is encouraged by the enthusiasm of Aeta children.

They have learned to speak Filipino while they continue to speak in their own language, she says. They have also learned how to count into their dialects.

"They are very interested in learning," says teacher Lilian Bautista.

Donations welcome

The center hopes to offer young Aetas a chance for a better life which was denied their parents and the generations before them.

Donations are welcome to sustain the feeding program of Aeta children and to provide them with school supplies. In the works is a basic literacy training for adults in the community.

For more information, San Buenaventura can be reached at 0917-899-5748.

Tales of hard work, family for Aeta kids in read-along

From page A1

The session featured returning storytellers Ruth Rodriguez and Noli Dredoz from Adarna Storytellers Inc. The audience was composed of students from Tala-Tala Elementary School and Bayan-bayanan Elementary School, including 36 school children housed in a nearby day-care center run by Quota.

The children belong to the Aankal tribe, one of the many Aeta tribes living in the mountains of Bataan.

Rodriguez, newly-elected president of Alitaptap, read "The Legend of the Five Rivers," a story of three elders from Quirino and how the god Yitos cursed them from a drought. It was published by the Pamechaan Center for Indigenous People's Education.

Eleven-year-old Jocelyn Abraham, one of the students from Tala-Tala, enjoyed the story best, while her cousin, Jaber Abraham, 14, found "Chenelyn, Gumelyn," written by Bhandee Datlino, more interesting.

Alitaptap's Dredoz said the story about a hard-working house help named Gumelyn and how she was cared for by the family who employed her when she fell ill. The story was published by Adarna House.

Loot bags

But for 13-year-old Bayan-bayanan student Rachel Garcia, the highlight of the session was the song-and-dance numbers Rodriguez and Dredoz taught the group in between reading stories.

"I also liked Chenelyn's because she was hardworking, but my real favorite was the singing and dancing," Garcia said.

Ten-year-old Carmel Garcia, also a student from Bayan-bayanan, was rewarded with a loot bag of toiletries and books after giving the correct answers in a pop quiz.

"I was able to answer because I really listened to the stories carefully," he said with a sheepish smile.

Then there was dancing

Rodriguez and Dredoz capped their three-story session with a modern storytelling of Edgar Allan's "Uwi: an ang Himay-himay ni Darna," which is all about a boy named Digoy who believed his mother, an overseas Filipina worker in Hong Kong, was a superhero. The story was also published by Adarna.

In between reading stories, Rodriguez and Dredoz taught the children the "Sobakichai dance." Grownups from Quota joined the fun by learning some of the steps themselves.

Loot bags filled with toiletries, books, stickers, crayons and diplomas—items donated by business employees, Vihal Prabhdiaig, dances Jovi Imperial and Luz Valenzuela from Quota—were also given away as prizes during the question-and-answer portion.

The children were served food prepared by Quota and Aeta housewarmer Elvira Pesale, and given gift packages at the end of the session.

Wonderful experience

Evelyn Gan Buenaventura of Quota, who organized the event, said: "I think the children enjoyed the activity a lot. This is really a first time for them. We really think that the children who have less should have more in experience."

"It was wonderful. Not only for the kids but for the grownups as well. It caught the attention of the children, the symbolism, everybody. It got everybody energized," added Quota president Meg Esmond.

Quota members present in the event were Lalo Gopoldan, Alice Elefano, Joan Reoni, Lely Cantos, Vicky Vergara, Irma Torres, Gosbe Abelardo and Sendit Enemark.

Lourdes A. Pagaid, Department of Education district supervisor of Dinalupihan-East, was also there.

After the program, the children, led by their house mother Perla Contreras, danced the "Kalos."

Contreras played a five-string, wooden guitar called "pinu-ong kaisi" as the children energetically stamped their feet to the beat.

More sessions

The Read-Along was launched in May 2007 by Bayanan Research, Library and Access Initiative to promote love for reading among children. The project received an award of excellence in November last year from the prestigious Philippine Quill, an honor given by the International Association of Business Communicators.

The next session on March 28 will feature the band Shakedia and will be held at the Ipo-gozon office in Makati at 10 a.m. Interested parties may call Elena Coquia or Girlie Bautista at tel. no. 897-6808, local 228.

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Corrections

IN THE MARCH 14 ISSUE, the Philippine Stock Exchange table on Page B2 of the Business section mistakenly included details on Keppel Philippines Marine Inc. shares. There have been no transactions involving KPMI shares since March 10.

• • •

IN THE MARCH 13 ISSUE, an editorial on Page A14 of the Opinion section, "Reparations for surveillance", misstated that Apolo Corp., which was established in 1833 as Casa Russa, is the oldest business house in the Philippines. British trading firm Ker & Co., Ltd. was put up seven years earlier.

Use gas royalties, GMA urged

A CONGRESSMAN TODAY URGED President Macapagal-Arroyo to channel part of the over $1 billion in annual royalties from the country's natural gas wells to a fund that would help jobless Filipinos cope with the economic crisis.

Antipolo's party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said the royalties, collected by the government for the last seven years under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), could make together tranches of the Social Security System (SSS) to provide financial assistance to members who had been laid off.

SSS administrator Francis Jr. Nori had explained the fund was contemplated by a loan cap in its bylaws.

The government is estimated to collect over $1 billion in annual royalties from natural gas and geothermal power suppliers, aside from Malampaya in Palawan, therein in Mabilog-Bandilan, Bacon-Manito and Tiwi in Lamon, Leyte in the Visayas, and Mt. Apo in Mindanao. Go Cebuanogue A

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OPINION

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The documents, stupid

REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES will choose to do with the impeachment complaint filed against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez by three-time Senator topnotcher Jovito Salonga and others, her fate in history is all but sealed. The reason is the perfectly illustrative classic Filipino saying, there is the last crooked syllable. "It's hard to awaken those who are pretending to sleep."

EDITORIAL

Whatever little of her reputation she survived her close association with and wide tolerance for the Arroyo administration will forever be associated in the apparent, the very justice, of that now-filthy-wise expression.

It is hard to wake up those who are only pretending to sleep.

If there any other officer of the law, in the post-Marcos era, who has so sedulously struggled to keep one's eyes shut in the face of evidence of graft and corruption? Even the Arroyo administration's irascible Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, notorious for his partisan approach to the administration of justice, at least tries to reckon with inconvenient reality. Gutierrez simply denies the reality, period.

Consider her boneheaded public honors decision-making process on the contentious P1.3-billion Mega-Pacific contract. While in our legal system the Supreme Court is not a trier of facts, it cannot pretend to be blind in the face of overwhelming evidence. Thus it had ruled that the sumcurious contract was anomalous on its face (the same finding reached by the Senate blue ribbon committee), and directed the Ombudsman to finally conduct an investigation. For some reason, Gutierrez dragged her feet, and was eventually admonished by the Court and given a deadline to meet. Just before the deadline expired, the Ombudsman announced that a host of minor personalities and at least one election commissioner were still face charges.

In the end, however, and based on hearings it conducted after the Court's original deadline, it found no one guilty of any crime. The Mega Pacific contract was illegal, but in the Ombudsman's view no one actually broke the law.

Those who are pretending to sleep are the hardest to wake.

We are led to consider yet again this Filipino expression because of the Ombudsman's recent inaction—that would be the polite term—in the case of the World Bank-funded road projects.

The Washington, DC-based multilateral financing institution had blacklisted three Filipino contracting firms, one of them permanently, because of what it said was evidence of collusion. As quickly became clear, the Ombudsman was furnished copies of the World Bank findings a long time ago, but did...well, almost nothing.

In a Senate hearing, Gutierrez even said there was nothing much she could do, because the reports were marked confidential.

Last week, the bank's representative to the Philippines, Bert Hofman, diplomatically reminded the Ombudsman and these senators and congressmen who had chosen to be obtuse that, in fact, evidence of collusion was readily available—assuming that they wanted the evidence in the first place.

"I notice, in the Philippines, the witness statements have drawn a lot of attention and a lot of press. But really, what I hear from my [Department of International Integrity] INT colleagues is, 'Look at these documents,'" Hofman said in a forum.

"Most of the evidence we find in the collusion cases from documentary evidence. They do interview witnesses. They do interview people to corroborate the evidence found in the documentation," he said. But: "This is all evidence on the bid itself: nothing to do with witnesses, nothing to do with statements, nothing to do with hearsay. This is all in the bid documents themselves," he said.

In 10 years of experience fighting rigged bids worldwide, the World Bank, Hofman said, had found the same patterns of collusion, which include almost similar bids, "quantum-side disqualification of bids" and "abnormally high bids."

We can read between the lines of this diplomatically worded reminder. The powerful Ombudsman has the mandate to initiate an investigation even without a complaint. That she considers herself hamstrung by the confidentiality of the World Bank report means she had not bothered to look for the telling evidence in the open. She has access to these, but apparently she could not be bothered, after reviewing a summary from the bank, to probe the documents.

Mount Ik is difficult to awaken those only faking sleep.

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That stupid 'right of reply' bill again

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

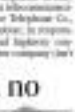
I WILL DISCUSS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONstrate the unpredictability of that stupid "right of reply" bill if it becomes law. Pre-senior columnist Max Soliven (whose compliment of some form once had appeared in the title of my column) would understand and asked what the Department of Agriculture is doing about it. Me immediately got three replies, all long, one from the producer of the thrillers Dollbelt Agricultural Feed, Sprin-Clay, Inc.; another from Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap; and a third from one of his undersecretaries. In replies of their respective letters, the three letters did not address the important question: whether or not the fertilizer found in question is below standards and specifications. We published the letter of Dollbelt (on March 11), we will publish the two others in the next column. The three complainants told me that they will reply to the reply of Dollbelt.

As you can, one column has already generated replies that will take up at least three times the space devoted to the original column. It is expected that more replies will be made to the replies of both sides, back and forth, and much valuable and limited space would be wasted on their versions of that, which would not contribute to the knowledge of the truth, anyway. The space devoted to Opinion could be better used for more important and timely subjects.

At present, editors can condense the letters without sacrificing the gist of the replies, but the "right of reply" bill, if it becomes law, will mandate publication in full, under pain of fine and closure, the letters of aggrieved parties word for word.

Publications survive on the advertisements that pay for the space they occupy, and from the circulation—the number of copies that people buy. People will not buy copies of publications that are full of self-serving replies. Readers want information, facts, the truth. That's why the newspapers we try to give them. A law forcing them to devote limited space to self-serving letters will destroy the press. It is the surest way to establish fascism in the absence of Chet newspapers.

An investigation like the Legacy rumu-rahoy



Yes and no

THERE'S THE RUB

Gonzalo de Quiros

I SPOKE BEFORE A GROUP OF FOREIGNERS last week, and someone asked me in the open forum if I thought next year's elections were going to make things better for the country. I said yes and no.

The yes is patent. Elections next year—as it least a presidential election and not synchronicity one which is the main object of Charter—will settle finally to Ghost Macapagal-Arroyo. That is of course change in itself. That is no mean source of pace, or blessing, at least because one should GMA goes and the country will finally be able to breathe. On the incidence of how's disease, hypertension and cancer will plummet overnight.

I remember again something the Makabayang bulisan said when the habitat over the wounding, on pain of becoming fruitless, that "they uphold the virtues of righteousness and call on their henchmen to stop money for bullsering party exactly all the sizes of corruptinventions. Duterte-Bidding said, "The ills of this country's problems will be solved by GMA stepping down." I said then, and I say now, "True, but a great many of those problems will."

It will certainly scrub the country's daily into a benign pleasure, disassembled by world-class corruption, world-class violence and a world-class system of justice where the guilty are rewarded and the innocent punished. There are the things things we have accorded to be known ing globally known for. A person's health is not naturally going to improve having a nasty fish-bone stuck in his throat pulled out, but it is going to give him some full of pleasure of heaven.

The even time I do not mind shortcoming of the elections next year is that it is not the kind of election one sees in many and this country. Ilgate the more the "presidentiables," or wannabes, start opposing the world of their ambitions or delusions, the better the chances of election pushing through. I figure the more the number of candidates there is, the better for politics or public attention, the more the election fever they generate. I figure the more the fuss for the presidential bets start making up, the more momentum they spin, turning the elections into a whirlpool that sucks everything in its path. Hell hath no fury than PEspouse robbed of their beguiled DPR.

But will the elections make this country better?

I don't mean that elections in the past have, and I don't know that elections in the future will. But I do know, having lived through many bad ones, that elections, however the jobs they often are in this country, are always better than no elections at all.

But there are elections and elections. Some offer the hope that things might turn out to be better. Most fill with the despair that they will only prolong the regime that essentially gives way to, or even prove it like the one of another Marcos or GMA. There's the rub. Where we stand right now, unless something dramatic happens over the next few months, the 2010 elections bear only the promise of the second.

Look at the Democratic Party identified by Pablo Ista—Rick de Castro, Renato Bantayan, Joseph Estrada, Ahmad Villar, Hal Mikkelsen and Peter Sotto—up to survey it could not have obtained better results. The list offers an almost convincing argument for no elections. There are those with a monument for heroes and closely demarcated expectations. The look at the Lomas names and you ask yourself what in God's name they stand for. You look at those and you ask yourself who among them does not have Noble loyalties and even more Noble principles. You look at those and you ask yourself if they are not the people Alexander Hamilton had in mind when he said, "He who stands for nothing will fall for anything."

It's particularly distressing in light of one thing. That is the potential of the elections to be not in epic terms, in the sense they that the American elections last November were so. The latter was not so much a choice between Barack Obama and John McCain as it was a choice between Barack Obama and George W. Bush. It was a choice between going forward or going backward, between freedom and repression, between hope and despair. Indeed, it was a choice, not unlike the coup elections of February 1986 in the contrasting between democracy and despotism, between decency and corruption, between Good and Evil.

The Evil is there. How much more evil can you point the person currently occupying the Palace by the Sirens? Or more to the point, how much worse can—and how much will—evil? I would have thought that Evil almost by sensory factors as opposite to spring to life. I would have thought that Evidence almost by its built-in nature as self-destruct would increase Light to dispel it. Not to us this country do we longer to, Instead of Good, all we have are Lesser Evils. Instead of Light all we have to look Dark. Instead of City and Ghosts, all we have are Bad, Dirt, Bog and Mantra.

One of course likes to note the results, or rituals the race, of the Philippine Obama, but he misses the point. Obama is not about results, he is about change. Obama is not about global crises, he is about resources. Obama is not about guilt, he is about truth. In any case, lesser Chi represented himself as the other side of the collusion of results, of the struggle between Light and Dark, of the battle between Good and Evil. And he is not the first to win for Good, as is a one-for Ramdag Cojuangco.

At least after the plagues and both Dalys visited upon the country, there is no Obama hanging over our look up to to deliver them out of the wilderness. At least after the blood and tears Marcos cause, there is no land, there was a Cory Filipino could look up to to replenish the soul and plant the seeds of a new life there.

What or earth have we got today?

Impeaching the Ombudsman

IMPEACHMENT TALK IS ALWAYS TASTE CARRYing it out to—borrow a word being used—Watergate latest this. The Ombudsman does not, thus she has ground to news about the impeachment charge filed against her with a thing of the standard. Will she run this hate?

A successful impeachment has been dubbed unlikely by the Chief Executive. The Constitution believes that security of senate is important not just for Civil Service employees but more especially for high-ranking officials whose duties prominently require freedom of action. They, for instance, the removal of a president is mentioned in an impeachment.

By now the Filipino public has become familiar with the fact that impeachment, as structured in our Constitution, has two phases: the House of Representatives phase and the Senate phase. In both phases, it is a numbers game.

Impeachment can only be initiated by the House of Representatives. Within the House of Representatives, there are two allowable processes. One, there is the normal process, dilatory, if you wish, where the appropriate committee votes on the evidence but it is the plenary body that passes the final vote after all the have ended and all fifteen congressmen have been overcome. Second there is the openly process: when the complaint has the support of at least one-third of the total membership of the House, the Speaker can acquire overcome by sending the complaint to the Senate by speed mail. That is what Speaker Jose de Venecia did with the charges filed in 2000.

The 1935 Constitution enumerated "culpable violation of the Constitution, treason, bribery, other high crimes" as grounds for impeachment. This enumeration was lifted from the US Constitution, but we deliberately omitted "misdemeanors," a common law concept, has no history in our jurisprudence and the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were concerned that it might be read to cover jaywalking.

Sounding Board

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

In 1973 we added "graft and corruption" to the list, and in 1987 we added "betrayal of public trust." By these additions, did we in effect add petty misdemeanors to the list? I do not think so. Lawyers will tell you that generally what is added to a number grants rule which says that when you have an enumeration, the items in the enumeration are to be understood as belonging to the same class. Thus the "graft and corruption" and the "betrayal of public trust" that are referred to must be of the same quality as treason, bribery or other high crimes. Or instance, I would consider the charges against the current Ombudsman, if substantiated, valid grounds for impeachment.

Remember also that the impeachment process is not a judicial process but a political process where I use the word "political" in the judicial sense. I mean that it is political in at least two senses. First, it is political in the sense that politicians is very much a part of the process.

Before an impeachment can go to trial by the Senate, the House must first vote to send it to trial. One-third of the House must vote to send the case to trial by the Senate. Every time an impeachment case goes to the House, you must tell by-whose down the House members. Be sure ask that about the current House.

It is the same if the impeachment finally goes to trial by the Senate. Consider the brief behavior of the US senators in the bill Clinton case. Not a single Democrat voted "Guilty."

This partly explains why no President has ever been convicted on impeachment—not in the Philippines nor in the United States. The impeachment process in the United States, which we have copied, was a deliberate modification of the impeachment process in England which provided a broader instrument of harassment. The United States made impeachment more difficult and we followed the example.

The impeachment process is also political in the sense that what is involved is not just a legal decision but also a policy decision. For that reason the responsibility for impeachment has been given not to a court of justice but to a political body "policy making"). Only Thus, when the senators deliberate on what verdict to support, the question they answer is not only whether there is evidence to support a "guilty" but also whether, under the circumstances, the wise policy should be to remove the offending official who is on trial.

In other words, a verdict of "Not Guilty" does not necessarily mean "innocent." It can also mean guilty, but not guilty enough to support removal at this particular policy option under the circumstances of the nation. When you look at it from this perspective, debate about evidentiary proof—whether proof beyond reasonable doubt, or preponderance of evidence, or substantial evidence, or even clear and convincing evidence—is not as important as it appears. What to decision is the gut feeling of individual senators.

Concretely now here is one to assess the future of the impeachment case against the Ombudsman? I believe that her first line of defense will be not up to the House. The President's use is standing on her side. Even if she chooses to be friendly, non-committal... perhaps for reelection reasons.

If she should fail in the House, where only one-third of the members is needed in mind her is to sit, she should prepare to meet the Senate. The vote of 16 members will be needed to convict her. Even listening to endless hours of senators committee their aggressive investigations. Remember, impeachment is a numbers game. It is not always about guilt or innocence. In the Senate, it can also be about grandstand elections.

How do we explain things to them?

THIS MORNING THE LONG GRAY LINE COMING OUT from the Philippine Military Academy will be lengthened by 184 fresh graduates who will be commissioned second lieutenants in the Philippine Army and Philippine Air Force. The young man who is graduating at the top of his class, cadet Ilan Filemon Castaneda, comes from the little known province of Aurora, the son of a public schoolteacher and a municipal official.

Of all the educational institutions of the land, none is probably more democratic than the Philippine Military Academy. Here, we see cadets for your neighbors, your relatives, your social standing, your family's fortune or whether your parents are married. The cadets come from every part of the country and in the time they represent the youth of the land, from the Batanes Isles to the Sulu Archipelago. The great majority of these young boys and girls are from the middle and lower classes of Philippine society and for many entrance to the PMA represented the only opportunity for higher education. Many of them would not be in college but for a Senior Bill. For a few, the vision of someday being AFP chief of staff was also part of the dream.

Reveille

Ramon J. Farolan

The members of PMA class 2009 join the Armed Forces at a critical juncture in the life of our nation. They are being asked to serve our people with courage, loyalty and integrity. The secretary of national defense, Gilbert Teodoro, in his remarks reminded them to strictly follow and observe the military code of honor, admonishing them not to lie, steal or cheat.

These are good reminders but as these young men accept the Philippine flag and the Philippine Constitution, they will have to ask themselves the uncomfortable questions: Why is it that in our country, we have so many poor people with courage, loyalty and integrity?

Perils of computerized elections

LETTERS

I WAS "FLABBERGASTED" TO READ in the business March 7 issue the statement of Juan Miguel Zubiri that "poll automation was only the first step toward achieving free, honest and orderly elections in May 2010."

Is it Zubiri now for the cause of honest elections? If yes, then this development in the long argument against the death penalty. It only shows that for as long as there is life, there is still hope for people to change.

However, the people should not be that easily deceived. There may be a first step and other succeeding steps toward achieving free, honest and orderly elections in the Philippines, but there is an ultimate step, and that is the public's duty to maximize cheating as part of their election strategy: remember "votes" generated by cheating and outcomes a proclamation secured through cheating.

Regarding the Comelec's plan to "computerize" our 2010 elections, here are my few brief comments:

1. "Biometrics control" must be incorporated into the machines. Without this, by who controls the machines and the ballots, also determines the results of the elections. In the manual elections of 2007, in Maguindanao, the syndicate was able to exclude the more than 3,000 persons supposed to be manning the more than 1,000 precincts therein. In a computerized election there will definitely be fewer people to exclude from the precincts.

2. For candidates who are actually cheated in a computerized election, what will be their remedy? What if thousands of genuine ballots were shafted by a syndicate, how would this be exposed in the ensuing election protest? In manual elections, the objection of "written by one" could be proven either by common sense examination or examination by handwriting experts. In computerized elections, how could "shafted by one" be proven? Moreover, what there is no remedy available to the "loser" would be the best incentive for dishonest politicians to continue cheating under a regime of "computerized elections."

Re-election law experts and IT experts should start debating these points. This is where technology meets the law and where both should cooperate with each other.

—AQUILINO "KIKO" PIMENTEL III,
Unit 2106, Milania Center,
33 Annapolis St., Greenhills,
San Juan City

GMA's use of SSS, GSIS funds illegal

AS MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL Security System and the Government Service Insurance System, we vehemently oppose the evil scheme of the corrupt Arroyo government and GSIS president Bonoan.

In 2008 to year 19 (2.5 billion each) from the SSS and GSIS as these agencies' contributions to President Macapagal-Arroyo's P500-billion economic stimulus package (SEP).

Firstly, Ms Arroyo's P500-billion ESP is unconstitutional. Based on it, there is no law passed by Congress for the purpose.

Secondly, the SSS and GSIS pension funds cannot be used for Ms Arroyo's ESP "without the consent of SSS and GSIS members," as pointed out by Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr.

Thirdly, there is no end to the litany of scandals, plunder and corruption cases haunting the venal Arroyo government: the P728-million fertilizer fund scam; the P5-billion overpriced Northrail project; the P1.3-billion Camsur computerization deal; the P1-billion pen-fillmore Diosdado Macapagal Highway (to apply demolition as the most expensive highway in the world); the billionaire JUDD multibillion-peso payoffs; and not to mention the recent P728-million fertilizer fund scam among contractors and influential people (including allegedly Ms Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo) in the bidding and awarding of World Bank-funded projects.

SSS and GSIS members justly fear that their sacred, hard-earned trust funds, totaling P25 billion, if placed by Ms Arroyo in her illegal ESP would only disappear into the bottomless pockets of corrupt Malacañang officials and their cronies and relatives, thus leaving the going-nuts of "computer" under the present administration in 100 percent of the project cost, as scandal after scandal shows.

We Arroyo can never touch SSS and GSIS trust funds without committing plunder. We are first Congress to pass a law authorizing her ESP in the same manner that US President Barack Obama first sought approval from the US Congress for his new economic stimulus package.

The widely perceived fake president heading an illegitimate government is fond of legal shortcuts... like the sweeps and broad dragnet Ferdinand Marcos, whose law she is destined to share when her venal administration falls under the weight of massive graft and corruption.

—BIJ SOLIMAN,
spokesman,
Movement for Members'
Ownership of the SSS
(MemberSSS), 77 Sanctuango St.,
Rainbow City 1473

RP should welcome a retrial

I RESPECTFULLY INVITE then Sen. Benigno Aquino and Eva Aquino, who felt deeply aggrieved by the presidential pardon granted to the 38 former soldiers who were convicted of the murder of their dear father, Sen. Ninoy Aquino.

Senator Ninoy said that "the convict had been lying since 1983 ... and for seven of years after that," and yet many convicts in opposite did turn their own words, former President Cory Aquino, knows who the alleged mastermind is. But sadly she has chosen to remain silent up to now. Why?

Certainly the entire nation wants to know the truth, and no less than the whole truth. According to the 1987 Public Attorneys' Office chief, Lawyer Persida Acosta, the real truth will be revealed only if the case is reopened and reinvestigated and if the Aquinos will agree to it. However, 2/3/1991 she added that they have new evidence and a slew of seven or so vital witnesses whom she named. Among them is the "missing link" who is, reportedly, residing now in the United States. In which case he will have to be consulted in the Philippines.

If all the information is correct, the will finally put closure to the festering issue of the Aquino-Galman double murder case. Indeed, the whole country should happily welcome this new development.

—ANTONIO
A. DEMAYA,
Tanalig, Ilihay

A chance to overhaul foreign policy

THE SECRET VFA 2 EXPOSED BY Sen. Joker Arroyo is the latest in a string of reasons arguing for the junking of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The VFA 2 document is so insult-that adds to the injury caused by Daniel Smith's contempt for our justice system.

The VFA must be scrapped now. It was ratified by the Senate in 1999, and 10 years of this unequal treaty is much too long already. The Senate should not waste a minute longer to effect the abrogation of the VFA.

From the very start the VFA has been one-sided. It was approved by the Philippine Senate but not by the US Senate. Thus even its status as a "bilateral" treaty is questionable.

The VFA 2 shows very clearly that the agreement violates the diplomatic principles of reciprocity and neutrality. An American soldier who has committed a crime in the Philippines, like Smith, can stay at the US Embassy; but a Filipino soldier can only be incarcerated in a US jail, as provided under VFA 2.

The issue of the VFA 2 and Smith's case provide us an opportunity to give our foreign policy a new focus—in the same way that the global crisis and its deleterious impact on our economy provide us a reason to embrace a paradigm shift in our economic model.

The VFA is no different from the unequal Military Bases Agreement. And the World Trade Organization agreements are no different. Both cut into colonial Party Agreement with America. The militant policy of the United States seeks to advance its economic agenda, not our national interests. It is high time for us to chart an independent foreign policy and a development model predicated on local industrialization.

—FR. BEN RAMADA,
secretary general,
Partido ng Manggagawa,
7 St Bridgets Sts.,
Barangay Pag-asa, Quezon City

Dropping of conditions a good move

THE GOVERNMENT DROPS CONDItions for resuming peace talks with Moro rebels" (Inquirer, 3/6, 9/9).

This is a good development. It only shows how sincere and determined the government is in bringing peace in Mindanao and elsewhere in the country. I am very sure that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is 100 percent behind the decision of retired PEP chief Avelino Razon, now the presidential adviser on the peace process. The Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front can now go back to the negotiating table.

This should not mean, however, that the criminal activities of the rogue elements of the MILF should be tolerated or condoned by the authorities. The hostile should be made to answer for their crimes.

I hope that the peace talks start as soon as possible so that both parties can resolve the conflicts and issues they have to. Government can then continue implementing its various national development projects for the people, especially the poor.

—BIAGIO IT,
manly_it@yahoo.com

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Across the NATION

W. Visayas power shortage feared

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—WESTERN VISAYAS officials have raised alarm over the possibility of a massive power shortage or high-

er power rates on Panay and Guimaras islands once the two power generators in Iloilo are turned over this month to a Singaporean-owned firm.

Provincial Administrator for Western Visayas Raul Banias, Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Jr. and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas will ask President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to delay the turnover of the Panay 2 Power Diesel Plant (PPDP) to SPC Island Power Corp. (SPC), formerly Salcon Power Corp., on March 26.

In a resolution adopted during its regular meeting on Friday, the infrastructure development committee (IDC) of the Regional Development Council pushed instead for the commissioning and operation of the two power plants by the National Power Corp. (Napocor).

Treñas, the IDC chair, said the group would ask the President to allow Napocor to commence operating PPDP until a new power supply contract between SPC and the power distributors is approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

The two plants, with a total capacity of 146.6 megawatts and a dependable capacity of 103 MW, were acquired by SPC for US$1.86 million in November last year in a package that included the 22-MW diesel plants in Bohol.

The PPDP accounts for the bulk of the 111-MW power generated on the island. Napocor is supplying the bulk of the needs of the seven electric cooperatives in Aklan, Iloilo, Capiz, Guimaras and Iloilo.

SPC director and treasurer Alfredo Benares, however, told the business community recently that the company would take over the PDPP on March 25 and immediately start rehabilitation work in preparation for the Visayas Supply Augmentation Auction (VSAA) program.

Tje SAA will cap excess supply from privately owned power generators to the power grid.

Napocor vice president for Visayas operations Danilo Sevilla said power distributors

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Duterte says military abuses can't be denied

DAVAO CITY—MAYOR RODRIGO Duterte has lashed out at the military for denying claims that soldiers had been violating the rights of civilians in Paquibato District here.

Duterte, who earlier asked the military to just "contain" Paquibato-versus instead of murdering civilians, said the abuses could not be denied.

Lt. Col. Roland Bautista, spokesperson of the 10th Infantry Division which has jurisdiction over the unit deployed in Paquibato, said the reported harassment of civilians were part of the lies being peddled by the communist New People's Army (NPA).

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao Command, even said that soldiers deployed in Paquibato, a hinterland district about two hours' drive from here, were there to secure the civilians from NPA atrocities.

But Duterte said his eyes would not betray him.

He said he saw the bodies of six residents of Barangay Binaton, who were murdered by soldiers after a land conflict exploded in the area in January and wounded seven soldiers.

"A beating here and there," he said while generating.

Duterte said he told Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro about the abuses in Paquibato, which the military and police have tagged as a communist hotbed.

Paquibato is where NPA rebels led by Leoncio Pitao operates. Pitao's daughter was allegedly tied and killed by suspected military agents early this month.

"I think you are the problem," Duterte said to the military.

He said it was no wonder that the NPA has not weakened over the years.

"You're just helping the NPA recruit more members," he said.

Duterte also blamed the military for regularly wounding civilians in the area.

Paquibato officials had accused the military of forcing residents to report to their camp and ask clients their political affiliations.

"They were also being forced to join the anti-communist Barangay Defense System, the officials said.

"You cannot just call civilians to report to your camp. You are not in Iraq," Hernando Perez, human rights lawyer from the University of the Philippines, said. —Inquirer Mindanao

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Quezon fishers rescue whale shark, turtles

LUCENA CITY—A 30-FOOT WHALE SHARK or "butanding" and six marine turtles were rescued in two Quezon towns in the past week, an environmentalist group reported on Saturday.

Sheila de Leon, director of the Tropical Additions Foundation Tropafound, a public interest environmental law center, said residents of San Andres along the Bagay Gulf in the Bicolo Peninsula saw the whale shark near the pier.

"The butanding again made its appearance after long years of absence," said the town, a native of San Andres.

She said that after an hour of "photo ops" and playful interaction with children, the town officials ordered the fishers to guide the whale shark back into the deep sea.

In another report, a group of fishermen from Atulayan town accidentally caught six hawksbill and green sea turtles, and two using rope nets, their town mates while fishing in Lamon Bay, said Dony Bernal, TF marine program officer.

On the same day, town officials led by Mayor Armenio Mascariña freed the turtles as the government declared "fish sanctuary."

In Calauag town, however, a 127-kilo dolphin was found dead with a shotgun wound. —Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Power shortage feared in W. Visayas

From page A-17

had to buy power directly from IPC as an agreed rate because Napocor was not allowed to purchase from an independent power provider and sell at a subsidized rate to distributions.

Tobias and Tupas criticized Napocor and Department of Energy officials for failing to institute measures to avert a power crisis before the plants' closures.

Tupas threatened to file charges of breach of contract against Napocor because the existing power supply contract with the electric cooperatives in Panay stipulated that it would supply the powers distributors until 2010.

Banias said the group was concerned that IEPC would discontinue supplying the electric cooperatives unless a new power supply agreement with a higher rate than the existing Napocor-subsidized rate could be reached.

ERC Commissioner Jose Reyes said during the meeting that it would take at least 75 days for the ERC to approve an application for a power supply agreement.

The officials said the power deficit could worsen the situation in Panay and the rest of the Visayas grid, which is already experiencing brownouts and low voltage due to supply problems.

Peak demand on Panay island as of this month reached 210 MW but the dependable capacity from power plants on the island was only 121 MW, said Raul Galanta of National Grid Power Corp. (NGPC) in a briefing at the ERC compound.

The 89-MW deficit is being supplied by the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid that draws from geothermal plants in Leyte and from the Luzon grid.

Father of seaman in Somali abduction seeks gov't help

By Felipe V. Calleo
Inquirer Visayas

BOGO CITY—A DESPERATE FATHER from Cebu went against the wishes of the recruitment agency and went public with his appeal for the government to help bring back his son and 22 other Filipino seamen taken by Somali hijackers in the Gulf of Aden last year.

Jesus Canoy Sr. of Poblacion, President Ramos town said that since the vessel hijacked by his son Jesus Canoy Jr., 31, got hijacked in the gulf on Nov. 11, 2008, he had not received any report about him.

"We are worried for the safety of our son because the manning agency has removed us as it is not media's help. I therefore appeal to the government to help him back home," Canoy told reporters on Saturday.

The 23 Filipino seafarers were crew members of the MT Irish Strength managed by Marlich Yichin Ship Management, and a long-term charter to Britshipping, one of the world's largest shipping and seafood company based in Norway.

Sea Cop Shipping Inc. and Aegean Shipping Inc. recruited the Filipinos, most of whom are Ilonggos.

Canoy said the manning agency asked the seamen's families not to report the incidence to the media so as not to hamper negotiations between the shipping management and the Somali pirates.

But Canoy said his family could no longer stop silent because it had been four months since the hijacking but still no news on what happened to his son or if and when they were freed.

Canoy Jr. joined the Irish Strength in July last year, his contract would end on Nov. 11, the father said.

Canoy Jr., single and the youngest of the six children of Canoy Sr. and his wife Lydia, was also the family's sole provider, according to his father.

Vice President Noli De Castro on Thursday told the bishops that he had ordered the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to station an official in the office of the manning agency that recruited the 23 seamen.

The vice president said he was surprised that the abduction had remained unsolved although it was one of the earliest incidents of hijacking.

De Castro noted that all other manning agencies and their principals have secured the safe release of their seamen on board vessels that had been hijacked in Somalia.

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SUN-DRYING A woman takes advantage of the sun to dry fish along the road of Nasugbu, Cavite. KIDLAT TOMAS

Metro Pacific to extend NLEx to La Union

MAKATI CITY—THE METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENT Corp. (MPIC) is considering investing in projects on the extension of the North Luzon Expressway up to Rosario, La Union, and the terminal 2 of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) at Clark, Pampanga.

President Washington Sycip will lead the groundbreaking rites for the NLEx expansion on April 8, said Manuel Pangilinan, MPIC chair, in an interview after the Holy Angel University have conferred on him an honorary doctorate degree in humanities and a medal of honor on Friday.

The expansion plan, with a tentative investment of P15 billion, is within the time frame we, he said.

It came four months after the MPIC bought the First Philippine Infrastructure Inc. But now the MPIC is 67.1-percent stake in the Manila North Tollways Corp., NLEx franchise holder, and 40-percent equity in the Tollways Management Corp.

The acquisition plan "doing very well and already complete," said Pangilinan.

The MPIC is also considering venturing into the Terminal 2 project at the DMIA that is being pushed by the government-owned Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC), he added.

The CIAC has set the minimum investment at P9 billion. The proposed facility intends to serve three million passengers yearly.

"We're still studying the situation. We have not decided yet. Of course, I want to see if it's okay. I hope we could do it," Pangilinan said in Filipino.

He said he made a site visit to the DMIA in February. The government developed the DMIA from the aviation complex left by the United States military when it pulled out of Clark in 1991. The 2,300-hectare airport is lined with more than 3,400 runways.

The CIAC board has allowed its joint venture selection committee to accept unsolicited proposals for the Terminal 2 project and reduced the requirements after the first bidding failed in 2008.

In the joint venture scheme, the CIAC and the proponent will take a 30-percent and 70-percent ownership share, respectively. The proponent will build, design, finance, equip and operate the Terminal 2. Dennis Orejas, Inquirer Central

Fr. Miguel Bernad, 91, dies

THIS PHOTO of Fr. Bernad was taken on May 12, 2008. CESAR RAMIREZ

MANILA CITY—FR. MIGUEL Angelito Arceno Bernad, S.J., author, teacher, historian, editor, journalist and critic, died yesterday at the Manila Bayan Hospital in Cagayan de Oro City. He was 91.

Bernad "was still up and about, reading and watching the pigeons at 9 a.m. the morning" when a nurse discovered that he had low blood pressure, Fr. Jose Ramon "Joy" T. Villarin, S.J., Xavier University (XU) president, told the Inquirer.

Immediately, his Jesuit colleagues administered the last rites to his room at the XU's Loyola House. At about 11 a.m., he was brought to the hospital, where he died of myocardial infarction at about 12:50 p.m.

At the time of his death, Bernad was with his Jesuit confreres and relatives, according to Villarin. He described the priest's passing as "peaceful."

"We will miss a great writer [but] we're also celebrating a great life," Villarin said.

Known to many Filipinos simply as Father Bernad, the priest touched many lives through his writings and lectures.

He was also a longtime literature professor at the Ateneo de Manila University and at XU during the Ferdinand Marcos years, and was a visiting professor of literature at the National University and the Tamkang College of Arts & Sciences in Taipei.

Of Spanish, American and Cebuano descent, Bernad was one of eight children of the late Misamis (present day Misamis Occidental) governor and later representative of the Second District of Misamis, Don Jeronimo Lobregos Bernad.

Born on May 8, 1917, Bernad grew up in Cagayan City and was acculturated to having parish priests as guests during meals. "By osmosis, I became a priest," he once said.

"I had a vocation," he said during a separate interview with this writer in 2004.

With all his achievements, Bernad considered "his greatest achievement," his Jesuit vocation.

Deeply Catholic with two sisters becoming nuns, Bernad took his Ph.D. at Pontificate Yale University.

He was the first editor of ASIAN (separately Jesuit Philippine Studies and he was the co-founding editor of XU's official journal, the Xavier Review, where he published the topics of Mindanao and scholarly papers on Mindanao's history, literature, culture and arts.

Antonio Montalvan, director of the Teodoro Kalaw Museum of Capiz University, described Bernad as "the greatest Filipino from Mindanao" whose "brilliance and love for the island had epitomized the triumph of the human spirit."

He will be buried in Misamis after a 9 a.m. Requiem mass on Wednesday. Christine Godinez-Ortega, Inquirer Mindanao

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Rolito Go now a live-out inmate

From page A1

but are required to report to Camp Bukang Liwayway the minimum security complex, by 5 p.m.

They are also required to wear brown prison shirts to classify them from others in the complex.

Half of sentence served

Asked what Go's status was, Calderon replied, "He can now move around the NBP complex without escorts and maybe work at the NBP offices. But he should still stay and sleep at the minimum prison area."

Calderon said the board assured its recommendation to release Go from the maximum security compound after the convicted Chinese-Filipino businessman satisfied the basic requirements for such a status.

He said Go, who is in his early 40s, had served more than half of his sentence.

Calderon brushed off claims that he gave preferential treatment to Go, saying he had allowed the discharge of several other inmates from the maximum security area.

The former chief of the Philippine National Police likewise said Go did not apply for his transfer as the board reviews the status of inmates regularly.

"Go's case underwent an automatic assessment of the board. Every month, I sign documents for the transfer of inmates even to our lawyer friend's relatives. We have 23,000 inmates so we should manage our resources."

Executive clemency

Sentenced by a trial court in 2005, Go has applied for executive clemency from President Maregapal-Arroyo.

The Magsaysay family declined comment.

Dante Jimenez, chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, said the citizen's brothers Dillan had told him that the family would wait for an official MR announcement.

Jimenez said he would strongly oppose any moves to free Go.

"We must first look into his records as prisoner. We must remember that he once bribed jail," he said, referring to Go's escape from the Metal Provincial Jail while he was undergoing trial.

Recently, the inquirer tried but failed to locate Go in Camp Bukang Liwayway.

The inquirer sources, including live-out inmates, said Go immediately left shortly after he signed documents pertaining to his new status. The sources asked not to be identified for security reasons.

"He was here for less than an hour. After that, he was allowed to leave by prison officials," one source said in Filipino.

Decision questioned

Another source questioned Calderon's decision to consider Go in the minimum security camp.

The source said only inmates from the prosecution are entitled to such privileges.

"Convicts from Metro Manila are not allowed to become live-out inmates so it is highly probable for them to escape because their home is just near Mandaluyong," the source said.

But Calderon admitted that inmates from Metro Manila were not qualified for the live-out status.

Asked why Go was moved from the maximum security area, he replied: "We will release his documents on Monday."

Maj. Robert Glagnet, NBP chaplain, said the man "qualified" to become a live-out inmate as he had vouched for his character.

"Although he's quiet and aloof, he's very kind to other inmates," he said.

Glagnet cited Go for his efforts to help poor inmates and their families and his support of their handicrafts.

"Mr. Go would even buy handicrafts which failed to satisfy the standards of quality produces just to provide a steady source of income for the inmates," he said.

"He used to be less composed. But he has mellowed down and learned how to control his temper. His attitude that he would not get back to his old ways."

WHAT WENT BEFORE

ON JULY 2, 1991, CONSTRUCTION magnate Rolito Go stormed out of a bakeshop downtown in San Juan, Metro Manila, after a fight with his girlfriend.

He got into his car, drove against the one-way traffic on Wilson Street and nearly slammed into the vehicle driven by Orlino Magsaysay, 25—he went out of his car, shot Magsaysay and fled, but a security guard jotted his plate number.

He surrendered on July 4, and a complaint for frustrated homicide was filed. This was amended to murder 16 hours later, after Magsaysay died.

The trial dragged, followed, but on Nov. 3, 1993, five days before Judge Benjamin Pelayo was to issue a verdict finding him guilty and sentencing him to life imprisonment, Go escaped. In 1996, he was arrested in a pig farm in Pampanga.

Go made several attempts for commutation of sentence and executive clemency but was rebuffed by the Supreme Court.

Magsaysay's mother Rosario has urged President Maregapal-Arroyo to reject pleas for Go's commutation of sentence, saying the convict had not shown remorse.

In October last year, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Go was ineligible for pardon because he did not meet the law that served half of his term.

—Inquirer Research

LIVE-OUT inmates who have almost completed their prison terms are allowed to walk around the facility unescorted but must report to Camp Bukang Liwayway by 5 p.m. —DAN LACSON

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Study shows good, bad among hopefuls

From page A1

And should President Maregapal-Arroyo seek another term, she might as well keep her economic policies central to her campaign.

But she better not repeat her "Gloria Lalamdemit" moodiness and her "problem-better-keep-it-to-myself" tendency to keep information away from her party.

These were some of the conclusions that can be drawn from a recent study conducted by the University of the Philippines (UP) system, among other critics, the "charismatic" of politicians with declared or perceived plans to run for presidency in 2010.

Before naysayers and their campaign strategists can take a sip or two from "Impression: Importance of Media Pressure on the Bid for the 2010 National Elections," a prospect of the UP College of Mass Communication.

The study, which relied on surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs), was presented to UP on Saturday.

The study aimed to gauge how the public views the candidacies in terms of the "slogan, symbols and adversaries" they are known by, and whether voters find these elements "desirable" or "undesirable."

This aspect of the study was framed to the Top 10 "potential candidates" or politicians who the respondents believed would run for the presidency.

The ranking was not necessarily a measure of the candidates' chances of winning but of their "desirability or acceptability" based on their media exposure.

GMA ranked lowest

Impression listed the Top 10—from lowest to highest—as:

• Ms Arroyo. Her slogan Gloria Lalamdemit (Lambing-woman) and her recognized symbol, the mole or tuntod on her left cheek, were both considered undesirable; her advocacy for economic development, desirable.

• Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay Jr.'s "Makati, Abot-Isa" slogan, his step being his own symbol and his economic development agenda were reportedly same across as desirable among respondents.

• Senator Francisco Joseph Sotto. The slogan "Sa susunod na buwan, pangulo na" (Next month, president) and his symbol, the "Sotto sweatband" symbol and his purpose adversary.

• Sen. Francis Escudero. His slogan "Iwa Chu" and his adversary for "youth empowerment" were deemed desirable. So was his supposed close resemblance to Bamboo, from musical group Apo Hiking Society.

• Sen. Panfilo Lacson. While his anti-corruption adversary got the thumbs up from the respondents, they still associated the former police official with the undesirable notion of being loyal-friend Bisaya ng Bahay, which emerged as both his slogan and symbol.

• Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando. His urban beautification slogan "Metro Gwapo" and his adversary for traffic management got the responsibility nod. But his symbol—the gusot (with blue) mole on his temporary, brown, round signs and colorful—proved to be a turnoff.

Media visibility risky

• Sen. Mar Roxas. "Mr. Palengke" (his slogan), the wet market (his symbol), and his adversary for poverty alleviation (subway) all registered as desirable.

• Vice President Noli De Castro. Respondents responded positively to his slogan and symbol "Kabayan," (countryman or townmate). They also found his erstwhile his advocacy for mass housing (probably).

• Sen. Loren Legarda. She wagers a "Green Revolution" (slogan) and is always seen wearing "white" (symbol) in public, both were seen as desirable. Respondents also associated her favorable safety means: promoting environmental concerns.

• Sen. Manuel Villar. His old campaign slogan "Sipag at Tiyaga" (Hard work) still served him well in the UP study. Desirable, too, were his choice of orange as campaign color (symbol) and his relatively new advocacy for the welfare of Filipino migrant workers.

Impression also noted that a candidate's "high visibility" in the media—TV, radio, print, or the Internet—"doesn't necessarily equate to electability."

"High media visibility was risky for those with political ambitions since media may emphasize the negative rather than the positive facets of potential candidates," the study said.

Shaping perceptions

It mainly explored how the media presence of Internet 2010 contenders has begun shaping voters' perceptions even way ahead of the official campaign season.

Research began late last year with 20 FGDs, each group composed of six to eight participants. This was followed by a survey of 687 respondents in Metro Manila, Laguna, Bicol, Cavite, Batangas, Quezon, Camarines Sur, Bulacan, Tarlac and Pampanga.

The study—a project of the UP Communication Research Department—was conducted mainly by students under Dr. Jose Lacaba and Prof. Almond Pilar Agudo.

China shows naval might

From page A1

even in this era of dialogue and understanding in the world, there will always be nations that will show might and maneuver provoked with actions like so," Gonzalez said.

He said the meeting of the national security chiefs would tackle the Philippine position on the matter and the ongoing measures in the context of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

"That's where we should be going," he said. "The only thing we can do is to resort to diplomacy."

In the declaration, China and Southeast Asian nations agreed to "exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability including, among others, refraining from action of inhabiting on the presently uninhabited islands, reefs, shoals, cays and other features, and to handle their differences in a constructive manner."

Baseless bill 'illegal'

China had earlier protested the signing of the baseline bill, describing it as "illegal."

But the Philippine government maintained that it was standing by its claim on the Spratly Islands and Arroyo said Monday—in unscripted remarks—that she was not potentially rich in oil.

The baseline law includes the disputed Kalayaan Group of Islands and the Scarborough Shoal from the archipelago, treating them instead as part of a "regime of islands."

Hill: China was adamant that the Philippines was claiming its territories in the Spratlys, particularly Kalayaan Island and the Scarborough Islands.

Secretary Hill told the Chinese protest could be considered a form of diplomatic "posturing."

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde yesterday described Beijing's move as a "normal conduct to international diplomacy."

"We should not be worried about it," Remonde said in an Sunday media forum on cross-strait Radyo ng Bayan. "The United Nations will be the final arbiter of the issue."

UN Law of the Sea

Remonde maintained that the baseline law was consistent with requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

"What our President and our government (officials) did was in accordance to their terms, conditions and duty which is to uphold and protect the sovereignty of our country," he said.

Remonde said the Philippine government would also have lodged a similar diplomatic protest if China or other claimants of the disputed island came up with an official action similar to the baseline law.

No official reaction has been issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs, but a Philippines' pat luck to Hizmet for his ultimate country's passing of an economic stimulus bill that included benefits for Filipino labor if they'll return.

The DFA spokesperson said another topic is the conversation was US cooperation with the Philippines and other countries in other issues such as the environment and terrorism challenges.

"That there is a significant readiness on the part of the United States to engage the Philippines and other countries will in regard to issues such as environment, climate change and terrorism dialogue, is quite important to us," he said.

Unimpressed

In the House of Representatives, some lawmakers were unimpressed by Obama's call for more talks, saying failed to assert Philippine territory over Spratly.

"In his guidance over Obama's call, the President hopes to ask Obama to turn South over to Philippine authorities or to tell him how to take and exercise the VFA," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said.

Deputy Rep. Abraham Mitra said Obama's threat was in any way lessened the necessity of having a VFA.

"If Obama had told the President that South would be United territory, then that would have made our day, a change in policy that we could believe in," he said to a text message.

In a radio interview, Montalvo Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas Bataan said Mr. Arroyo should not have been happy just because Obama called her.

"She should have told him that the country would abrogate the VFA if the United States would continue to insist on its own interpretation," he said.

Malabon Mayor Jejomar Binay down, pitching Obama's call, saying the need to review the VFA.

In a statement, Binay, the United Opposition president, said Obama's support for the VFA was expressed because it was consistent with US interests and policies.

"The VFA needs to be reviewed from the framework of what is best for the Philippines," Binay said. — Pia Rebong reports from Christine U. Bagayaoa and Marlon Ramos

Standoff in South China Sea

Tensions in the area rose when the United States naval intercepted by international waters of southern China to protect a naval surveillance patrol that was involved in a standoff with Chinese vessels.

China said the US patrol vessels were within its 200 kilometers economic exclusive zone, but the United States has insisted they were in international waters.

The Spratly and Paracel island chains have been flash points for years.

The Spratlys are claimed in full or part by China and Vietnam, as well as the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, and the Paracels are claimed by China, which also occupies them, as well as by Vietnam and Taiwan. With a report from Jerome Aning

Dark horse lacking spectacular record

From page A1

weight, so one has taken a commanding lead.

It is a beautiful mare who Unless is heard enjoy with this fastest of companies, especially with Sen. Loren Legarda by hitching on the turbo of the four of 12 percent, still down the right.

What is surprising is an overall field of nine protected candidates is that four appear to have led ground: Senator Manuel "Mar" Roxas (6 percent) and Senator Loren (6 percent), Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (5 percent) and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando (4 percent).

Nothing much has changed in the February survey conducted with the survey of January 2009. The results margin of Sen. Richard Gordon, a presidential aspirant, to fall into at the survey results that excluded him from the list of the nine "winnable" presidential hopefuls.

He said people, not surveys, elect leaders. Yes, true that is an old refrain of politicians trailing in surveys. The more Gordon complains, the more he sounds like a poor sour loser.

Pure keeps distance

With the election only 24 months away, the fact is that no leads have been burst out from the wide political landscape, thus giving rise to many dreams. So far a dark horse is in the ring. Some of the same has sparked a groundswell to augment the public imagination.

The decision of Teodoro to run is a response to such a chance for a dark horse to fill the leadership vacuum.

The chance has been reflected in recent moves among civil society groups to draft Chief Justice Reynato Puno as a presidential candidate on a platform of moral regeneration in politics. This movement seems to have fizzled out after Puno discretion of himself from the matter.

Teodoro has fared poorly in previous surveys. His announcement spurred an endorsement from Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

The move followed by a decision to woo Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and other

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DEVOTEES crowding Mass spill over to the courtyard of the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran.

Mass attendance up

From page A1

dominoes to the church. In fact, Wednesday and Sunday collections in Baclaran have slightly increased.

The Baclaran shrine is a favorite place of solace for pot-pot seeking special favors from Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and for any good Samaritan willing to help someone in need.

On the first Wednesday of the month, the shrine gets 3,000 to 4,000 written petitions. It receives 2,200 to 2,400 petitions on ordinary Wednesdays.

"Those are only the number of letters we get. Not all can pass up," said Brian Bernido, a lay missionary of the shrine for 18 years.

Devotees also recite prayers of Dambuglup—around 500 are received weekly.

Petitions for jobs

While petitions used to focus on family and spiritual problems, recent ones are more work-related, such as parents for landing a job in the country or abroad, and for passing of job interviews and board exams, according to Bernido.

Tens of thousands of jobs have been lost in the country over the past few months because of plunging demand for exports like electronics and garments at the recession in the United States and other developed countries deepens.

The Philippines could lose up to 300,000 jobs in the first six months of the year, according to the labor secretary.

Other petitions include prayers for health and recovery from sickness (particularly cancer and other ailments needing surgery), peace in the home, travel abroad, release of housing loans and even divine intervention in the payment of utility and credit cards.

"Those petitions keep us grounded in the day-to-day struggle of ordinary people," Fr. Tito Cueto said.

Redemptorist priests read some of the prayer petitions during Mass.

Mass for OFWs

Starting that predominantly overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families were a recurring theme in petitions and even confessions, the priests decided to hold special Masses for the workers and their families at 9:00 a.m. every last Friday of the month.

Shortly before the Mass for OFWs runs to be held in January, the priests wondered, "Would people attend?" They were surprised when the whole church was filled.

When Cueto became shrine rector a year ago, he noticed that some 20 beggars would appear on Tuesday nights to solicit patron of the Wednesday devotees.

Recently, he counted more than 50. "Most of them are old women," he said. "We cannot prevent them from coming, but we are thinking of a more systematic and effective response to their plight."

The Redemptorist priests are noted for their social programs for the poor, as well as their activities during the material law years, when they were smugly called "Redemptorrorists."

There seems to be less political activism now, which is one of the whole Catholic Church, but the social services remain.

"We used to get eight walk-in clients a day, but now we get around 15," said Arlene Lacuna, social worker of the shrine's Crisis Intervention Center.

"The more numerous requests are for transportation back to home provinces, medication for ailments such as diabetes and stroke, hospitalization and surgical operations."

Clients who seek help come from Metro Manila and as far as Mindoro, Quezon and Leyte.

Rosito Barcoso, another social worker, said the Redemptorist Education Assistance Program got 331 applicants for college scholarships and continued to do so after the deadline ended last month.

The scholarship used to be open to students from any part of metro Manila. Soaring costs of education forced the program to limit scholarships to Pateños residents only.

Street children

The hard times are also sending more children to the streets.

Flora Hungerbee, team leader of outreach services and director of the Tarnelli Center for Street Children, said the children the center gathered recently for street education sessions reached 150 from last year's 60.

"Street children are now less willing to stay at one shop to center," she said. They prefer to be out in the streets to help parents by selling goods (plastic) bags or newspapers (junction).

The three social workers noted that ironically more clients were being referred to Baclaran by government agencies, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Office of Vice President Noli de Castro.

"Five years ago, we were able to get any assistance funds from the DSWD," Margallan said. "Now, those agencies say they really have no funds."

Transparency, generosity

Baclaran shrine's social services are sustained by donations—not only from wealthy persons but also from ordinary people who share whatever they have.

Donors include those whose petitions were granted and those who want to share their blessings, say, lotto winnings.

One donor said she doubled her donation because she believed that "if you increase your donations, you will get more blessings in return."

The devotees' generosity is partly encouraged by the Redemptorist policy of transparency especially now that people are fed up with rampant corruption, according to Cueto.

Monthly updates

The priests give monthly updates—announced before Masses—on where collections go.

According to the last quarter of 2008 report, a total of ₱3,441,352.46 went to needs assistance for 166 patients, such as 55 chemotherapy sessions, 51 operations, six wheelchair/walker/crutches for 38 patients.

A total of ₱254,764.89 was used for transportation, medical, food and funeral assistance.

The shrine also supports Ateneo Art Hall and parish scholars and helps fund the social services of the other Redemptorist shrines in Lipa City in Batangas and Legazpi City in Albay.

"In our homilies, we try to help people see things in a bigger context," Cueto said.

"The Lord does not want people to wallow in poverty. We want devotees to think, why does poverty persist? Hopefully the shrine also helps people to realize that there are so many possibilities that we can strive as a people."

He also expressed hope that "devotees will develop a sense of mission and answer to respond to what is happening in the larger society."

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MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A1

SPORTS

ALASKA point guard LA Tenorio (middle) loses control of the leather after a double team by Purefoods' Kirby Raymundo (left) and Brian Hamilton. AUGUST TALA/ INQ

Aces, Beermen score victories

By Marvin K. Carallo

ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT LOOKED different with Sam Miguel was Gabriel Freeman's head bandage.

Otherwise, the Beermen still looked menacing and were still in merciless.

Sam Miguel rolled to its fourth straight win last night, breaking away in the third quarter even with Freeman going in and out of the game because of foul for a 106-91 victory over Coca-Cola to stay alone at the top of the Metrobix Ultra Fiesta Cup standings.

Freeman was hardly recognizable after getting rid of the bruise and walking to the Aurora Coliseum floor sporting an afro, but Sam Miguel looked the same as it posted a third straight lopsided victory to open its 9-5.

The Tigers wouldn't capitalize on Freeman being saddled with fouls early, losing for the second straight game to drop to 1-3, now tied with Red Bull and Alaska for eighth spot.

And despite Freeman scoring just 11 and grabbing 13 rebounds in 24 minutes, San Miguel wound up posting another convincing win after getting its reserves in mix during 3rd by Wesley Gonzalez' 20 points.

"We still have a lot of issues for improvement," coach Siot Tanquingcen said. "We were able to get our way out of this game. And I think we still have games personnel or injuries-wise more."

Alaska began trying to undo the damage wrought by the rout for Reed Ellis, riding on the duo of all-remaining import's heroics in trip Purefoods, 94-84, in the first game.

Alaska notched a long-awaited win in its 9th tournament behind Ellis' 26 points, 16 rebounds and five assists.

"We're just happy to have him back," Alaska coach Tim Cone, who became the winningest coach in the league with his 402nd victory, told reporters. "I just hope his return puts us back in the championship picture."

Ellis replaced the ineffective Galvin Young, who fouled out in all his three outings with the Aces—all losses.

In climbing to 1-3, Alaska also got big games from Lit Rosario and Tony Dela Cruz, who combined for another 35 before Dela Cruz injured his left wrist (3:22 left).

It was the second straight loss to three reigns for the Giants (2-2), who on Friday ended San Miguel's six-game as 39 points before yielding, 1-22, 3:00.

Cone entered the press room the league's winningest coach, but he tried very hard to downplay his achievements as a coach. He said those 402 wins were the result of his long tenure on the Alaska bench and that Baby Dalupan, his idol, remains to be the greatest of all time.

"I'm just happy to have an owner stick with me all those years," Cone, who has been Alaska's coach for last 20 years, said. "Baby is the legend and he deserves to be the legend. To me, it's all about longevity."

LAKAS 103 (BUNGUAT)
Ubando-Cullamat
4:50 p.m.—Burgos
King vs Ubando Ball
7:30 p.m.—Barangay
Quezon
vs Barrio Obrero

The scores:
First Game
ALASKA 94—Ellis 26, Dela Cruz 16, Tenorio 15, Rosario 11, Miller 10, Yeptenyan 4, De Ocampo 4, Young 4, Fonacier 2, Fortuna 1.
PUREFOODS 84—Raymundo 19, Yap 2, Ilo 10, Bravo 18, Hamilton 10, Villanueva 10, Castelo 3, Mallari 4, Ngu 0, Jamito 0, Rivera 0.
Quarters: 20-25, 46-45, 73-64, 84-84
Second Game
SAN MIGUEL 106—Gonzalez 20, Sandro 10, Pena 15, Freeman 13, Andamon 12, Villanueva 13, Pinto 11, Custodio 8, Ross 0, Sangalang 0.
COCA-COLA 91—Gallinger 23, Reynido 22, Calaguian 13, Lastimo 11, Mao 2, Demusician 7, Macapagal 3, Dilosa 2, Serrano 0, Mendoza 0, Santos 0.
Quarters: 23-27, 49-48, 81-82, 106-91

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DID YOU KNOW

THE ICONIC 18 Representation building complex sits on a 15-hectare land in Constitution Hills, Quezon City, which now looks the like New York. The complex is comprised of four structures—the North and South Wing buildings which were completed in December 1977, the Annex building which was finished in 1981, and the Mini-building which was completed in 2001.
Cyril, Bookends, Inquirer Research

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Ducat's daycare center for poor kids closing

Hostage-taker cites lack of funds

By Jeannette I. Andrade

FOR ARMANDO DUCAT JR., AN ENGINEER WHO WAS CHARGED for holding a busload of children hostage for several hours in 2007, the graduation on Friday of 120 students from the Mutuos Daycare Center was both a happy and sad occasion.

Ducat told the crowd who had gathered for the simple ceremony in Sitio Compound, Tondo, that this year's batch might be the last to graduate from the preschool which he owns.

"I owe a debt that the Mutuos Daycare Center might slowly disappear," he said.

"In my two years in jail, I was deeply affected [financially]. I lost millions [of pesos] in my desire to give, in my hope of making the government aware of the dire state of education," he added.

Ducat and his aide, Cesar Carbonel, were released on bail from the Manila City Jail in December. Both were last 26 counts of serious illegal detention at the Manila Regional Trial Court for holding 26 students of the school captive before releasing them unharmed.

The 57-year-old engineer had told he stopped the incident to draw attention to corruption in government and to demand better lives for the children.

Ducat later told the tearful crowd of parents and teachers that although the future of the preschool was uncertain, he was still hopeful that "someone would be kind enough."

DUCAT, P.A.

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Cops to tear down precinct 'squatting' on sidewalk

By DJ Yap

THE SAN JUAN POLICE WILL demolish its police community precinct in violation isolated Barangay New Guinea to serve as an example to illegal settlers in the area, the city's police chief said yesterday.

Supt. Procopio Lipana said the police personnel—reliefs in half) on the sidewalk to make room for the base—would be torn down within the month once they find a replacement headquarters for policemen assigned at the barangay.

The area was earlier designated a "discipline zone" because of the presence of numerous criminals.

Lipana noted complaints from others illegal settlers in the area, who insisted that the city government could not force them out of their houses since even the police precinct was also technically a squatter.

"We decided to demolish the PCP to serve as an example to them," he told the reporters.

Lipana said they would begin dismantling the other illegal structures in the area once the precinct had moved to its new quarters.

Recently, the San Juan City government led by Mayor JV Ejercito designated West Crame as a "discipline zone" in response to the growing operation as a haven for criminal activities, including drug trafficking.

Man dead, 3 wounded in shooting

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A MAN WAS SHOT DEAD while three others were wounded allegedly by barangay officials in Manila Barrio Quezon City, yesterday.

Supt. Rolando Nabalia, deputy chief of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Unit, identified the fatality as Rodrigo Morales, 56.

On the other hand, those who were wounded were Ronald Rama, 37; Dionge Gonzales, 34, and Lloyd Antonio, 29, all residents of Barangay Manila Fairview.

Nabalia said Rama was in critical condition while the two barangay officials were in stable condition.

At least five members of the Barangay Police Services (BPSO) in the area and three others would be questioned in connection with the shooting, he added.

Citing investigation, the barangay desk officer, identified three of the BPSO members as Barry Bendaño, Rubien Sandoval and Leonito Bendaño.

Bendaño told Brahian reported the incident to him at around 11:15 a.m.

Officer on case POI John Flores said the shooting took place in Malvarez Subdivision, North Fairview at around 10 a.m.

Based on their investigation, Flores said that at 9:30 a.m., the BPSO officials, who were on board the barangay's official motorcycles, tricked

COMMUTER MAKES A SUGGESTION

Ernie Herrera of Antipolo City writes: "Lance Sequeri raises to Manila and those what I notice every time I ride in the MRT or LRT. Why are the officials of the two lines not considering the difficult for millions of commuters by making the train tickets available only at the stations? In North America, Europe and Asia, passengers can buy their train tickets from just about anywhere like in the supermarkets or department stores. Maybe the LRT/MRT management can find a way so that people can reload their train tickets in stores. I will be thankful if you can publish this letter to make life easier for commuters daily.

Maynilad fixes leaks

THIS refers to the report of leaking pipes published in "Citizen's call" on March 2. We would like to assure you and the public that these concerns have already been addressed by Maynilad's technical team. The leaking 20 mm service connection in Quirino Highway corner Cairo Drive in Barangay Talipapa Bahay has been repaired and the road surface restored to good condition since Feb. 23. Meanwhile, our contractors are working on the reported leak on Sinsuat Avenue corner Calamba Street. They expect to complete the repair work by March 5. Maynilad is implementing aggressive water service improvement plans in Quezon City and the rest of the Metro Manila West Concession Area. We apologize for the inconvenience these activities may cause to residents and motorists in the area.

CHENILDA O. DOMOTO, Maynilad corporate affairs and public relations head

Water leak on Banawe

THERE is a water leak on Banawe, in front of Maxwell Retreat House (used like Rosa Rosal Street in Magallanes) on Block 8. Thanks. ADEL AT, Quezon City

Squatters on Taft Avenue

THE SQUATTERS at the corner of Pres Quirino and Taft Avenue are indeed growing in number. This is how as seen at yesterday's noon time. At night, these particular streets squat on the sidewalk. JOYCE BRAGANZA JR, Manila, Manila

Rampant drug pushing, gambling

TALAGANG sa ang barangay ng Malvar and many parts of the city. The sale of shabu and marijuana is rampant and Pedro Royal Street, Barangay Pasong Putik, Quezon City. Illegal numbers jueteng

Overcharging taxi drivers

DI SAMA-samang UM Metrobank have not learned their lesson despite the rollback in diesel prices. They do not even give the 20 percent discount to senior citizens. LETTE FERNANDO, Metrobank, Quezon City

Inconsiderate bgy officials

ATTENTION, Mayor Belmonte: The barangay hall officials at Mother Ignacia corner Roces Avenue the right not how near Moreta. But every night that was convenience, making it dangerous for motorists turning right. JBT JC, Quezon City

Not again, please

A NEW manhole lock, on Project 4 avenida had to put up with the dust, noise and traffic caused by digging for pavement improvements. Must it re-put talk with utilities. And last night the digging started again. From the information on the signboard, it is for the Project 4 - JP Rizal Street corner Aguinaldo and P. Tuazon. What a waste of people's money especially during this time of crisis considering that the road is still in good condition. But for us who face the suffering we have no choice and will undergo again. MEC, JV, J.P. Rizal Street, Project 4, Quezon City

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Former OFW robbed, killed inside house

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A FORMER OVERSEAS WORKER was robbed and killed inside his house in Manila shortly after midnight yesterday.

Reynaldo Feliciano, a resident of Interior 1, Agustin Francisco St. in Sta. Ana, was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila due to stab wounds in the face.

SPO2 Jessie Tolentino, case investigator, said that several hours before he was killed, the victim, who used to work as a factory in Taiwan, brought home two men with whom he had a few drinks.

At around 12:15 a.m. yesterday, a wounded Feliciano knocked on the door of his sister-in-law's room and asked her to take him to the hospital. The two men were nowhere to be found.

Tolentino said a check of the victim's belongings showed that his black belt bag and two cell phones were missing.

He added that they found in the victim's living room the knife which the two men used to stab him.

Ducat's daycare center closing

Front page A21

to give. I hope we can give some blessings."

Since putting up the daycare center several years ago, he has shouldered the costs of running and maintaining the school while providing free education to children in the depressed area.

According to Datul, he spends between P800,000 and P700,000 a year for the salaries of teachers and staffers, including the school supplies for the students.

He pointed out that the 130 students who graduated from his daycare center now only a very small percentage of the 30,000 children in the Bondia Compound who have not been given an opportunity to go to school.

He another words, however, failed to dampen the upbeat mood at the graduation ceremony. Parents happily took pictures of their children as they accepted their diplomas from Datul who, on top of a handshake, gave each a bubbled sweet.

Margie Balana, 27, the mother of one of the graduates, said she intended to enroll her daughter at the D'Gaussen Elementary School.

Balana, who was six months pregnant, was accompanied by her three-year-old daughter whom she said she wanted to send to the Montessori Daycare Center.

But with Datul's great announcement, she said she was glad to say to where her younger children would study.

Datul, meanwhile, urged the parents of

ARMANDO Datul, who hugged an unnamed beneficiary of his daycare center in Bondia Compound, Brgy. Bambang, Pasig City, on March 21. Datul is, in a way, following in the footsteps of his late father, Mang Pandoy, who founded the center in 1987. Congratulations are in order. 130 children who graduated from his daycare center in Purok Compound, Bondia, Manila.

this year's batch of graduates to take steps to ensure that children from other areas, including those in the lanes where they live, would be able to enjoy their basic education.

While typical, he said, "I can see in their faces a dream for a bright future."

METROBRIEFS

Vendor killed over battery

A CELL phone battery cost a vendor his life after he was stabbed by the buyer on Saturday after noon in Manila. The victim was identified as Mohammad Sumbar, a resident of Dunlop Street in Sta. Mesa while his attacker was known only as Alex, a tricycle driver. PO3 Jonathan Bautista of the Manila Police District homicide section said the two argued after the victim demanded payment for the cell phone battery he had sold to Alex. According to witnesses, Alex got angry, took out a knife and stabbed the victim thrice in the chest. Jeannette I. Andrade

Mug's staff to build houses

IN LINE with International Women's Month, Cosmo Magazine delivers the hot. Business Empire women by getting involved in social work and encouraging its readers to follow suit. To do so, the publication has come up with a new project aimed at empowering poverty. The magazine's staff will head the Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition 2 cast at Government Lot F, Barrio de Concepcion Cubao, Barangay Pinagkaisahan, Pasig City, on March 21. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. they will help build houses with habitat for Humanity PH organization and this is what's handsome. Everyone is invited to the event.

Edna Lorena B. Cuaso

The WORLD

Guinea leaders confess to role in cocaine trade

CONAKRY, GUINEA—WHEN THE PLANES AIRmail loaded with cocaine, it was Guinea's presidential guard that secured the cargo.

Drug deals were conducted inside the first lady's private residence and in the president's VIP salon at the international airport. To avoid detection, cocaine was sent to Europe in the country's diplomatic pouch.

As the president of Guinea admitted before their TV sets, top government officials one after another are confessing to their role in a lucrative international cocaine trade. Organized by a military junta that seized power three months ago, the confessions offer unprecedented insight into an exploding drug trade in West Africa, one that connects coca leaves grown in South American fields to cocaine in European clubs.

The confessions paint a picture of an illicit underworkd that has grown in ingenuity, with the help of officials, members of the president's family and security forces. They also show the large role Guinea and other West African countries are playing as drug hubs, and how vulnerable they are to the corrupting influence of drug dollars.

A recent United Nations report found that at least 46 tons of cocaine have been picked up in or transported through Guinea en route to Europe via West Africa since 2005, bringing profits that sometimes exceed the entire defense budgets of countries it passes through.

Two years, the drug trade was an open secret in Guinea. The latest circle of former dictator Lansana Conte, who ruled Guinea for 24 years until his death, was deeply corrupt, with officials driving upscale SUVs in a capital where most people live without electricity.

Conte died in December. A day later, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara, a junior army officer, grabbed power in a coup and promised to crack down on corruption, including on the flagrant drug trade. In his more than a dozen people have been arrested, but Dadis has failed to arrest well-known members of his own military junta who are believed to deal in drugs.

The confessions began two months ago on state television in what is now known in Guinea as "The Dadis Show", broadcasts that have caused a spike in TV ownership and are the constant topic at lunch and over coffee.

First up was Ousmane Conte, the feared eldest son of the deposed dictator who was considerable under the previous regime. He admitted what everyone in Guinea knew but did not dare say.

"I acknowledge that I was in the drug business—and I regret it," said Conte, dressed in workman's wear taped inside his interrogation cell.

In a jailhouse interview, Conte said a friend brought in "medicine" for his hemorrhoids at Conakry's Airport. When the plane arrived, his friend called to wake him. Conte then went to the airport accompanied by the presidential guard to secure the cargo, he said.

Conte claimed he did not know at first that the cargo contained cocaine. But his friend later told him, he said, and Conte accepted a $300,000 bribe.

Other officials confessed to equally bold behavior.

The late president's brother-in-law said he met with Latin American drug dealers inside a villa owned by his sister, the former first lady. The head of the country's intelligence unit said he personally accompanied a convoy of trucks containing drugs to the capital. The former head of the police force was challenged to account for the source of funds for a university he is building.

Even the former head of the country's anti-drug task was interrogated on state TV for his alleged role. The task was in charge of seizing drugs when a cache was found. But instead of arresting and destroying the drugs, the cocaine was often "recycled," said top police officials and foreign diplomats. AP

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE
Municipality of Dinagat
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Telephone No. (085) 342-7044 • Fax No. (085) 342-7033

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipal Government of Dinagat, Province of Surigao del Norte, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all eligible contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contracts:

PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME OF CONTRACT	ABC	NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
2009-08	1. Supply and Delivery of Vehicle Construction Supplies and Materials intended for the Repair and Construction of the Don Carlos Integrated Rice Terminal (Phase III)	1,500,000.00	2,000.00
2009-09	2. Supply and Delivery of Roofing Materials intended for the Partial Construction of the Don Carlos Integrated Rice Terminal (Phase III)	500,000.00	1,000.00
2009-10	3. Supply of equipment intended for the Partial Construction of the Don Carlos Integrated Rice Terminal (Phase III) and Rehabilitation of Municipal Roads @ New Visayagan (Lot 2, Barrio)	210,000.00	500.00

Note: In case of, in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive procedures using Non-Discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part 2 (IRR-2) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to manufacturers, sole or legal agents, producers, or authorized suppliers, duly licensed to operate in the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 7160 (RA 7160). Bids from bidders who exceed the eligibility shall not be opened. Do not open the eligibility check is described in Section 37 of the Bidding Documents). The Procuring Entity may, at its discretion, post-qualify the bidder with the lowest calculated and CCB) shall reserve for the post-qualification stage in order to make determine the responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project specified in the bidding documents. Bidders shall submit Calculated Responsive Bid (CRB), who was determined as such during the post-qualification process shall be declared as the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid (LCRB), and recommended for award of contract.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the BAC Secretariat for the period March 17-30, 2009 upon payment of a non-refundable fee specified above for every contract to be bid. The method of payment shall be in the form of cash/manager's check/cashier's check/bank draft/ the project the bidder or his duly authorized representative.

You may visit a Pre-Bid Conference prior to all interested parties on February 2009 (Tuesday) at 10:00 A.M. at the Municipal Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Don Carlos Municipal Building, Don Carlos, Bukidnon.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the BAC Office on or before the scheduled opening of bids: 31 March 2009 (Tuesday), 10:00 A.M.) at the Municipal Mayor's Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Don Carlos Municipal Building, Don Carlos, Bukidnon. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in form (1) CASH / PO of the ABC; BANK GUARANTEE (1.5% of the ABC); SURETY BOND CLEARANCE (5% of the ABC). Bids shall be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PROCURING ENTITY and examine the Bidding Documents at the BAC Office. For inquiry, please call the BAC Secretariat at tel. No. (085) 342-7044/342-7033 (PLDT).

The Municipal Government of Don Carlos, Bukidnon reserves the right to verify the validity of any information or authenticity of any document submitted in the course of bidding and to undertake cease inspection of offices and facilities of bidders. It likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality thereof, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the LGU. It shall not assume any responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify any bidder for any expense incurred in the preparation of his bid, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ENGR. ANTONIO G. CASABUENA
Municipal Mayor/Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
BAC Chairperson

(CN - March 16, 2009)

Pakistan arrests opposition leader Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE, PAKISTAN—Police put opposition leader Nawaz Sharif under house arrest Sunday to stop him from leading anti-government protests, his spokesman said, fanning a political crisis that has alarmed the United States about Pakistan's ability to fend off growing Islamist violence.

Sharif addressed hundreds of police-surrounded supporters in the eastern city of Lahore before dawn—in Sunday and detained about 200 of his supporters gathered outside.

Officers shouted party officials as order organizing Sharif and his politician brother Shahbaz were to be placed under house arrest for three days.

Shahbaz and a host of other protest leaders were underground to dodge similar orders than Shahbaz, a senior government official, said the list of those to be detained included the head of Pakistan's main Islamist party and a leader of its activist lawyers movement.

Lawyers and Sharif supporters had planned to gather Sunday near Lahore's main courthouse before heading toward Islamabad.

To thwart them, authorities parked trucks across major roads on the edge of the city and set police took up positions outside the railway station and government buildings.

Television images also showed police commandos wearing flak jackets and armed with assault rifles apparently marching for Shahbaz in Rawalpindi, a city just south of the capital.

Shahbaz, speaking to Geo television by phone, appealed to ordinary Pakistanis to come out onto the streets.

"[President Asif Ali] Zardari has put the nation into this deep crisis by breaking his promises," he said.

Zardari and Sharif are under pressure to reach a settlement from Washington, which fears the government is already bogged down in domestic struggles when it needs to focus on economic problems as well as Pakistan demands for more help with the faltering war effort in neighboring Afghanistan. AP

Sharif

WORLD BRIEFS

Malaysia cuts foreign worker permits by 70 percent

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia has slashed its work permit approvals for foreign workers by almost 70 percent so far this year, faced with the twin threat of layoffs and recession, according to a report Sunday. In January and February, an average of 2,500 permits were approved every month compared to 800 last year, following a more stringent vetting process by the authorities, a Home Ministry official told the Star newspaper. "Those responding for foreign labor have to prove that they have made the effort to employ locals," the ministry's senior deputy secretary-general Tiga Arshat Raja Bidin Mahrup was quoted as saying. AFP

Aid workers abducted in Darfur released

KHARTOUM, SUDAN—Three foreign aid workers abducted in Sudan's troubled Darfur region have been released unharmed, three days after their captors at gunpoint led international groups to question how they can continue to work in the area. Sudanese television showed the Doctors Without Borders workers—a Canadian nurse, an Italian doctor and a French project coordinator—stepping off a military helicopter at El Fasher airport in North Darfur with the local governor. The governor, Osman Kibir, said Wednesday's kidnapping was carried out by a group seeking to retaliate for the International Criminal Court arrest warrant issued against President Omar al-Bashir on charges of war crimes in Darfur. AP

Sri Lanka war zone hospital runs out of supplies

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA—Aid agencies have stepped at a makeshift hospital in Sri Lanka's war zone because of stock of basic supplies such as anesthetic and blood bags, the top government health official there said Sunday. Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah said the situation was so bad that bed sheets were being used for bandages, while sticks from palm trees were being used to brace fractured limbs. AP

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Pacquiao ditching TV partner?

Boxing superstar close to signing new deal with 'giant network'

By Pinoy R. Cacilla

THE NEXT TIME MANNY PACQUIAO's fans get to watch the Filipino boxing superstar fight live on local television screens, it will be most likely no longer courtesy of Solar Sports.

The world's pound-for-pound king, according to unimpeachable sources, is weeping his last with the troubled sports channel and looking to hook up with one of several interested networks, including media giant ABS-CBN, for his mega-buck, four-opponent Wildo Mosun Ruby Hunter on May 2.

The business demand about the development formerly right from the source, who spoke on the condition he not be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The source also declined to discuss the details of the looming split but hinted that Pacquiao's camp is "very close" to striking a new deal with "a giant network."

Pacquiao's second fight was beamed locally by Solar Sports through DBM-7 (which he has a weekly show, "Pinoy Records," with Atenee basketball superstar Dyan Ta).

The Pacman is in the United States training for his coming junior welterweight match with Hatton, who is undefeated in the 140-lb division.

Several issues have cropped up as a possible snag for his duo-fan. Junior Ichiji, among them, Floyd Mayweather Jr. His fight could possibly be the final—and one of the richest fights—of the Filipino ring icon.

Pacquiao had said in several TV interviews that he would retire at the end of the year to become more involved in his political career.

ABS-CBN, which currently airs most of Pacquiao's fights in his rise to global superstardom, is one of the leading contenders to land the lucrative contract.

Doubts about Solar Sports's ability to secure an expensive coverage began to surface after a series of events that did not help the cable giant's image any.

Solar Sports postponed a fight card, featuring world champion Mosito Donaire and fellow-Americans Brian Vlorio, scheduled this month because sponsors could only commit a bigger budget in the second quarter of the year.

Last week, the network also requested a 25-percent discount in its contract with the Philippine Basketball Association, a slash down that is expected to be rejected by the league's board of governors.

The sports channel also slashed 30 to 50 percent off the salaries of personnel doing the PBA games coming with the Fiesta Cup.

A Solar Sports official said they failed to meet "the high goal we set" when they acquired the rights to air the games before the start of the season.

The network is asking for the discount with the PBA set to impose its "lockout clause" on direct product competitors of the 12 teams in the league.

The clause restricts Solar from carrying advertisements of products directly to competitors with the member teams of the league, thus drastically narrowing the cable company's revenue pool.

MANNY PACQUIAO: Business distraction

THE BLUES' five-goal hero Anthony Garcia (7) hits a backhand shot as the Gray's Charlie Peterson (left) gives chase and Garcia's teammate Tonio Tebias (4) races to provide support

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5th Leg	Iloilo City	April 16-18
6th Leg	Kalibo Aklan	April 20-23
7th Leg	Cebu City	April 26-30
8th Leg	Lapu-lapu City	May 1-3
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Blues outlast Grays in high-goal thriller

By Jeanne N. Paje

ANTHONY GARCIA (LAGUNA) CORE HOME with barely a minute left in the final chukker as the Blues survived the Grays' late comeback for an 8-6 decision yesterday to win the high-goal match of The Globe Polotours Invitational.

Garcia, a Chicago-based professional polo player, scored the Blues' victory with a goal-mouth shot that ricocheted to with 50 seconds left. It slammed the door on the Grays whose four-goal spree had closed the gap at 7-6.

"I hit the ball, then it bounced off another horse, then it went in," said Garcia after the thriller at the Equine Sports Field of the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park, Makati City.

"I guess it's a lucky shot, Colin whatever, but the ball is round."

Garcia bounced with five goals in the four-chukker match, completing the victory spoiled by Tonio Tebias who got the Blues to a strong start with two goals in the first chukker.

"We started off pretty well, then we slacked off a bit in the middle of the game," said Tebias. "Coming into the last chukker, we didn't play defense as good as we did in the beginning, so they just came back."

Garcia's younger brother Adrian, a 16-year-old high school junior from Boston, scored on a penalty in the opener as the Blues surged to a 3-0 lead.

Father Santi Arbes powered the Whites with four goals for a 7-3 victory over the Blues in the low-goal match.

Arbes, a political science student from La Salle, scored three on penalty shots to push the Whites ahead at 4-3 in the first two chukkers.

"The other team fouled us more, and that gave us more chances," said Arbes as he established a double lead with his father Ann, who scored one for the Blues in the high-goal match.

Jun Escobio tied home two goals and Fred Bustamante added a marker for the Whites, who also had Bobby Roque in the winning quartet.

Garcia, the 36-year-old captain, scored the Blues to a 7-2 advantage before the Grays rallied behind Ignacio Bordina and Charlie Peterson in the final six minutes.

Peterson netted a penalty shot from 30 yards, followed by two consecutive goals from Bordina in a three-minute span as the Grays moved within 7-6.

Mitts 1:40 remains left, Peterson again converted on a penalty from 40 yards for 7-6, before Garcia came through with the decisive goal for the Blues.

"They kept playing harder and harder," said Garcia. "They deserved more urgency and we were just trying to keep a cushion. But it was a great game, pretty exciting."

PETRON

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Tagum teener rules triathlon as top 2 finishers DQ'd

By George Lizares, Contributor

IT PAYS TO FOLLOW RULES.

Jefferson Tabayne found this out yesterday as the unheralded teenager from Tagum City rolled over the first leg of the Speedo National Age Group Triathlon Series in Davao City.

The top two finishers—Orol Villot-ura and Bryant Sterling—were both disqualified after officials found they were not able to complete the bike leg.

Tabayne, who finished third, was declared the winner with a clocking of one hour and 53:55 minutes. He was already in the showers when officials told him about his rivals' infraction.

Johannah De Benito ruled the women's division of the 1.8k swim-30K bike-8K race that drew 65 racers from Davao City, Davao Oriental, Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Tagum, Tacloban and Manila.

The 17-year-old De Benito proved unstoppable throughout the race, clocking in at 2:16:09.

The other age-group winners in the men's divisions were Mingyon Solaire (2:08.51) in the 20-24 brackets, Jeramiro Cabillo (1:57.54) in the 25 to 29's, Christopher Ryan (2:03.11) in the 30 to 34 group, Bernd Pascual (2:08.08) in the 35 to 39's, Arthur Campos (2:16.38) 40 to 44 group, Danny Dumbar (2:26.43) in the 45 to 49's, Edmund Ayling (2:30.33) in the 50 to 54 and Edgardo Villar (2:31.28) in the 55 to 59 division.

Cheryl Ramora topped the 20 to 29 age group of the women's race after coming in at 2:33.25, while Felina Tadiaman, who finished a strong second to De Benito overall, was the top member in the 30 to 39 with a clocking of 2:33.33.

'Quick-fix' RP football team bared

By Cedrolf P. Tupas

IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY FOR THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM THAT will see action in the Asian Football Confederation Challenge Cup Qualifiers in the Maldives next month.

The Philippine Football Federation is fielding yet another hastily formed squad, which has yet to train together with barely a month to go before the tournament.

The PFF has asked former national coach Aris Caslib to coach the squad, although the undivided fate Boda carries said he is still waiting for an appointment letter from president Noli Martinez.

Nevertheless, Caslib submitted a 39-man pool for the April 14 to 19 tournament, where the country will face Turkmenistan, Bhutan and the Maldives.

The RP team has been without a coach since January, when Juan Castillo, who was also PFF technical director, stepped down, citing his total loss of confidence in the leadership of Martinez.

"It's sad," said Caslib, who served as national coach for close to four years until late 2007. "The players and coaching staff will need to sacrifice so much because of the short time to prepare for the event."

Martinez, who survived a no-confidence vote in the PFF Congress last month, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

If the latter has way, Caslib said he would put the national team program in the proper direction after the Challenge Cup.

The Philippines actually has a decent record in the Challenge Cup, winning three matches and holding 2006 champion Tajikistan to a draw last year in Subic.

Instead to the pool were Neil Etheridge, a standout goalkeeper from Pallisic FC, and his fellow Hi-Skilsoul Chris Greatwich, Simon Greatwich, Chad Gould and newcomer Robert Gier, a defender of Ginto Athletic in the Conference National, the fifth-tier league in England.

Filipino-Dutch teenager Jason De Jong and Fenny Brunner have also been recalled, while the team also listed highly touted midfielder Stephan Schrock, a German with Filipino lineage.

Brothers James and Philip Younghusband have also been included in the pool, but it is uncertain whether they will play because Martinez allegedly failed to deliver on his commitment to them during last year's Challenge Cup.

Caslib, who coached the team in the AFF Suzuki Cup last year, on Saturday questioned the selection of some of the foreigners with Filipino roots who, he said, were not better than local players.

He did not name the overseas-based players, though.

"It's just a quick-fix solution," he said. "It will not solve the problem in the long run."

Also part of the squad were national team mainstays Aly Borromeo, Emelio Caligdong, Ian Araneta, Anthel Benitez, Orlando Bocolet III, Jason Cordova, Robin Dorsman, Amir Pantualan and Rony Deslar and collegiate stars Francis Cruzillo, Jess Andrei Sanchez and Jose Antonio Adaro.

BALL IS UP: RP team Emelio Caligdong (13) plays against the Bhutanese last year.

Top Bacolod pugs head crack Leyte boxing field

By Cedrolf P. Tupas

BACOLOD CITY, THIRD TO UNDERLINE to tag as a gold mine of ring talents again is the maiden staging of the Sinait-Mag-Vinarta Area Boxing Tournament on March 22 to 27 in Ormoc City and Tacloban town in Leyte.

The Bacolod squad of Rep. Monico Puentevella, which ruled the National Championships in January, headlines the list of 22 teams seeking action in the tournament open to boys 13-15 years old and to youth boxers under 19.

Out to challenge Bacolod are teams from Eastern Visayas, including Samar, Leyte and Biliran provinces.

"I'm not after money in this event. In my confident because some boxers will be available from Eastern Visayas," said Northern Samar Gov. Final Daza.

The tournament, which will be followed by similar events in Mindanao, Luzon and Southern Tagalog, is a vital part of the grassroots program of the new sports leadership under chair Mitzmar D. Pangilinan and president Ricky Vargas.

"These will give our aspiring boxers in the countryside all the opportunities to be part of the national pool," Vargas said.

Hosting the Visayan tournament are Ormoc Gov. Eufrocino Codilla, the mayor of Ormoc, and brother, Elmer, the mayor of Barugo.

SPORTSWATCH

Busy PSA Forum features Peping, Barrios

RAMOS

THE PSA FORUM WILL HAVE A BUSY AFTERNOON (March 17) as Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Renaldo "Sonny" Barrios and PBA media relations coach Vong Villanueva lead the guests list at Shakey's (Malate) branch.

The forum begins an hour earlier at 10 a.m. as the PSA will be having its election of officers at this end of the occasion.

Barrios and Quiao are expected to update sportswriters about the national team's preparations for the major international events to be held later this year, while Cojuangco will talk about the Olympic Committee's plans for the newly extended term of his assembly.

Officials of the coming Shakey's volleyball summer camp sponsors this week's guests list in the public sports program slated for every 10:00 (South) Radio 97.9 and sponsored by Shakey's, Asics, the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. and Softed Battery.

PSA president Aldrin Cardenas of the Daily Tribune is calling on all members to come and participate during the election.

RP kayaking series goes to Hundred Islands

THE FIRST LEG OF THE NATIONAL KAYAK SERIES TO BE HELD IN THE COUNTRY'S most talked about destination, off Alaminos, Pangasinan, for this year's national leg from April 24 to 26.

Dubbed as the Kayak Explore Hundred Islands, A Summer Fun challenge, the event features activities for the expected 400 outdoor sports enthusiasts, including a 25K kayak race of hundred islands.

PCAP derby under way at Makati Coliseum

THE EXCITING CORE FOR 2009 PCAP COCKPIT OF THE YEAR title heats up once today via a 5-cock derby featuring some 80 fights at the Makati Coliseum.

The third straight cockfeats lined up by the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) main-stream event.

Pinoy Cockers Top Fighter Handler Derby white Game Captain Champion Gangi and guest participant Dr. dela Rosa (Pasay Amis) emerged as co-champions in the second leg.

It is still anybody's race among the PCAP's 30 members, according to promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salazar and Cliff group.

Klub Don Juan derby sizzles at SJC today

THE KLUB DON JUAN-MANILA DERBY 5-COCK DERBY KICKS OFF today at Don Juan Coliseum with more than P1.5 million at stake.

Klub Don Juan de Manila, a group of well-known businessmen, is headed by businessman Jun Alcantara while Parkland Pet members of SJC Cockers group for supporting the three-day hard-hitting derby.

Klub Don Juan's first venture into cockfighting has four derby legs, with the Lolas and Tita Ana entry emerging as cock champ.

Fighters up were NINE DIXIE, Samuel Concrete Breaker, Erwin Painter III, and Linggasan Sweetie.

Politicians and sports are running mates

I KNOW THAT MANY PEOPLE WILL DISagree with me for saying that politicians and sports do mix.

What's wrong with having politicians in sports? What's wrong with being in government when that very government helps the cause of sports in general and the athletes in particular?

Like the private sector, the government can also sports the needed boost.

This is no belief for Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping, a two-time congressman from Manila's third district, and former five-time Tesda congressman Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, who are now locked in latest conflict.

As a journalist of long standing, I feel bad that our sports leaders quarrel. This is distressing to their lofty positions and affects the future of our athletes. The athletes shouldn't be hearing about this bickering while they are preparing for the Live Southeast Asian Games, set in December this year.

I do hope Angping and Cojuangco reach a peaceful and reasonable settlement for the sake of Philippine sports.

* * *

Gone are the days when sports leaders pocketed in our working fronts. In a bygone era, sports leaders did their jobs in a

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

spirit of peace and harmony. Many of them were pals of heart and true in virtue.

One good example was the late Dr. Regino Haruay, the former Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation secretary-treasurer, who made it a point to return his excess allowances to the Fed coffers after every trip abroad.

During his 33-year stint, Haruay left large footprints in sports because he cared not for himself but for others. Haruay was a former shoulder champion of the province but Eastern tunics, the forerunner of the Asian Games.

In the past, sports was the preserve of the "pure and gentleman sports leader." But, sadly, this is not the case anymore.

* * *

Lord spare us as a nation. If nobody tries to fix it, then the situation will just get worse.

What is needed is a mediator—possibly an unbiased party—to justify up the PSC-POC differences.

Recently, athletics president Go Teng Kok exhausted to mediate in the dispute, saying he feared a disastrous campaign for Team Philippines in the coming SEA Games.

He added that, even though he is the special assistant to the POC chief, he was doing it on his own and not as a representative of the local Olympic body.

* * *

As a native son of Binalbagan, Negros, I take pride in my hometown's Gilas-Sigh center, a therapy and rehabilitation center equipped with modern facilities. Perhaps the first of its kind in the province, everybody may name for free.

A brainchild of Mayor Vic Mayor Tito Santiago, Gilas-Sigla is staffed by a top notch doctor and six professional physical therapists, who are graduates of top medical and nursing schools. Their salaries and benefits are shouldered by the municipal government.

Launched during the incumbency of former Mayor Nancy Ceron, Gilas-Sigla is being considered by Mayor Nyong Guillermo, who is serving his second term.

Dr. City Sy-Agallera heads the medical staff and supervises PN Janice, Michelle, Perry Ryan, Allan and Lawrence.

Jungolf stars join Pancake House tourney

JUNGOLFERS compete for Order of Merit points in the monthly event.

THE GOLDTOWN FIRST JUNIOR parlayers shoot for riches this again when the Philippine Jungolf Tour crowns the Pancake House Junior All Star Jungolf on March 30 and 27 at the Southcourse of Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

The crowns of the Callaway Junior World championship head the field in the tournament that marks the start of the Pancake House Champions League.

The top finishers earn points for the Pancake House Order of Merit. The top players in the Order will earn educational scholarships.

"Through this tournament, Pancake House establishes its commitment to a staunch supporter of a worthwhile advocacy and enhances Juhue of Grandfoyers, organizer of the event.

Bernadette Lee, brand group managing director of Pancake House, said they are hoping the tournament will produce more international-caliber golfers.

Danny Diaz, chair of The PACE and the tournament will be held once a month during weekends.

Cedrolf P. Tupas

Donaire, Peñalosa, Nietes Boxers of the Year

DONAIRE

PEÑALOSA

NIETES

TJ BOXING WORLD CHAMPIONS WHO DEFENDED their titles on separate occasions last year emerged as the Boxers of the Year who will be honored during the 2008 Gilded "Flash" Nicole Memorial Awards on March 23 at the Manila Hotel Tent City.

The year's top boxers are RP flyweight champion Nonito Donaire, WBO bantamweight titlist Jerry Peñalosa and WBO minimumweight titleholder Donnie Nietes.

The three will receive boxing's highest accolade: boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao, who will be honored this year as the World's Best Pound-for-Pound Boxer.

Pacquiao, who was elevated to the Hassle Boxing Hall of Fame in 2007, and the three boxers of the year will lead international and national champions in the Awards Night and Banquet for Champions held during the 74th birthday anniversary of Nicole, the world's longest reigning junior lightweight champion (1946-47).

Despite an absence of almost a year, Donaire, who made headlines in 2007 with his win over unbeaten Australian Vic Darchinyan, retained his RP flyweight title with a sixth-round technical knockout of Mzwati Mbabalane of South Africa to rule his single fight for 2008.

PACQUIAO SPARMATE

Briton Khan stops Barrera in 5

AMIR Khan (left) lands a punch on Marco Antonio Barrera's chin. AFP

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND—AMIR KHAN'S SPEED PUNCHES KOS OFF Marco Antonio Barrera in the fifth round of Saturday's lightweight bout, marking a turning point in his career six months after a major setback in the same arena.

The 22-year-old Brit won on a technical decision after a disciplined battering of the ear-battered Mexican, who was screened in blood after a cut to his forehead in a clash of heads in the first round.

The tide of blood pouring down Barrera's head was never stemmed, and the ringside doctor eventually called a halt to the bout.

Khan's gamble to fight a seven-time world champion 13 years his senior paid off, with the 2004 Olympic silver medalist banishing memories of being humiliated by Breidis Prescott in 54 seconds last September in only in his 21st professional bout.

"The fight was make or break for me, but I felt so comfortable it seemed liked easy work catching him with the jabs," Khan said. "I'm happy with the performance. I mustn't have done much wrong in that fight."

Khan has been transformed by trainer Freddie Roach and sparring with pound-for-pound great Manny Pacquiao—mention he left worse rougher in the end than the fight itself at MGM Arena.

"The jabbing and patience—I felt so strong. You could see the difference," Khan said. "I had to take some shots in that match. I made some mistakes in the past and I'm not going to make them again."

On the undercard, Glo Afolabi claimed a cruiserweight title by knocking out Enzo Maccarinelli, while Ronnie Martinez knocked out Nicky Cook to win the WBO super featherweight belt.

Afolabi's decisive right hook in the sixth round knocked out Maccarinelli (29-3), the Welshman who lost the #WBO title to David Haye last March.

Afolabi (16-1-3, 8 KOs), who was born in London of Nigerian parents but came from same Los Angeles, won the belt Haye vacated when he moved up to heavyweight.

Earlier in the night, Martinez knocked out Cook in the fourth round to capture the IWBO belt that Cook had held since September.

Cook was in control of his first defense until the fifth was floored by a left uppercut from Martinez (21-6-1, 13 KOs) in the fourth round.

Shortly after Cook got up from the canvas, the Puerto Rican mandatory challenger landed a powerful left hook to Cook (29-2) struggled to get up again, referee Dave Davis called a halt. AP

Angping would rather refurbish RMSC

By Jane Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMmission would rather improve its existing competition venues than build new facilities elsewhere during these difficult times.

PSC chair Harry Angping said building a brand-new sports complex would be a heavy burden for the government amid the global financial crisis.

Angping's statement came two days after Philippine Olympic Committee spokesperson Joey Romasanta said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco is planning a billion-peso, world-class sports training center at the family-owned Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

Cojuangco has already submitted to the Olympic Council of Asia a proposal to build the complex. The OCA is scrutinized to have made a pledge to help finance the project through a grant from the International Olympic Committee.

REMEMBERING the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex would be more practical in these times, says PSC chief Harry Angping.

"Times are difficult," said Angping. "Unfurbishing existing facilities is actually more practical than putting up a brand-new sports complex."

The head of the government sports agency has actually opposed the public bidding the renovation of several facilities inside the 11-hectare, decades-old Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

He maneuvering the PSC came out with a couple of joint advertisements in a national daily last week for renovations rammed in refurbishing the swimming venue amid the cash-strapped times.

"We will make sure the renovation of these facilities will be awarded in the most deserving contractor," said Angping.

It was the first time the PSC came out with an advertisement inviting the public to bid for the renovations of RMSC facilities, he added.

Apart from the public works projects, Angping had slashed by half the PSC's contractual workforce as the agency would spend more on the needs of the athletes.

Best joints under the team members of the track and field stadium were also dozed down and would soon be turned into student-accommodations.

"We should turn in much as we can and spend the money wisely," said Angping.

Remember said Cojuangco presented the initial draft of the 58-hectare Luisita project to OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah's last week during the council's congress in Kuwait.

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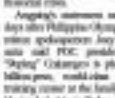

COJUANGCO

ELIZALDE

ANGPING

2 Visayas fives gain regionals

SANTOS PETROLEUM UP RADIO and Bomaguete Say of Bacolod became the first two teams to qualify for the regional finals of the Makin Na-tional Basketball Training Center (MBTC) 13 League recently.

Santos Petroleum routed Dumaguete Say, 108-69, for the first Championship and also claimed the second conference title over the same rivals after a 101-78 win in the 9th Hang-Gym.

Only Pelopero, named second conference MVP and Most Outstanding Player, fired a combined 30 points in the two championship games as Santos vowed Dumaguete Say to the Visayas finals against Cebu Cordova-da and BMBU Espana.

Pelopero was backed in the Area B sub by Don Ebondanit (18 points and 9rbs.) and Jun (15).

Dumaguete Say drew nine points each from Marnido Tan, Scott Salvador and Joseph Villanueva.

Joining Pelopero in the regional wars were Gerry Abadiano (Davao Pendaran), Cadiz Toledo (Dumaguete Say), Scott Salvador (Dumaguete Say) and Francis Gonzalez (Santos Petroleum).

Named Best Coach was Vicente Cuello of Santos Petroleum.

BC Computers bested 4th Chinatown, 106-56, for third place. Cliff Tiglo led BCC with 22 points followed by Adam Schropshire 15 and Emmanuel Tendilla's 13.

SEAG buildup smooth despite leaders' row

By Mari Anthony Reyes

DESPITE THE QUARRELS BETWEEN the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee, there was hardly any glitch in the country's preparation for the Laos Southeast Asian Games, officials assured yesterday.

SEA Games chief of mission Mario Tinchangco said their one-on-one meetings with the heads of various national sports associations are running smoothly and they expect to complete the roster of Laos-bound national athletes soon.

"There is no delay in our work and the office of chief of mission is functioning well on its own," said Tinchangco.

He noted that athletes now train even harder because separate teams from the PSC and the POC are monitoring their progress.

"The only problem we see is how to get funding," added the sepak takraw chief.

The two sports bodies had a falling out recently over the athletes trained by PSC-allocated money.

Among other things, Angping wants an entire rule for the government sports agency in the selection of the SEA Games athletes, but the POC and the PSC plan months of government intervention.

Efforts to make both parties talk again on one-on-one got into motion Thursday last week when Art Macapagal, the shooting association head and brother of President Macapagal-Arroyo, brokered talks between Angping and Frank Elizalde, the International Olympic Committee representative to Guinevaring.

Elizalde was among the signatories to a petition the POC executive board sent to Malacañang asking for Angping's immediate relief.

Tinchangco said the POC criteria giving athletes who reached the all-are medal standard of the last SEA Games outright qualification is still in place.

Liverpool crushes Man United

LONDON—LIVERPOOL STUNNED Manchester United 4-1 at Old Trafford on Saturday to open up the Premier League title race.

Although Cristiano Ronaldo fired United ahead from the penalty spot in the 32nd minute, Liverpool pounced on errors by United to produce three points and cut the defending champion's lead to four points.

Fernando Mills hesitated in dealing with a ball over his head and Fernando Torres dispossessed him before running unchallenged into the area and rolling it past Edwin van der Sar for the first league goal the Dutch keeper has conceded at Old Trafford since the Red Devils beat Hull 6-3 Nov 1.

Steven Gerrard put Liverpool ahead in the 43rd minute from the penalty spot after he had been brought down by Darren Fletcher just inside the area. Fabio Aurelio nailed a free kick past Van der Sar for the third goal two Dimitrios added the fourth in injury time. AP

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SPORTS

Wade fuels Heat in 3 OT

MIAMI Heat superstar Dwyane Wade soars for one of his 30 markers. AP

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE SCORED 50 points as the Miami Heat pulled off two-huge feats after its rallies to beat the Utah Jazz in a triple overtime epic 140-129 on Saturday.

The Heat erased a seven-point deficit in the final 55 seconds of regulation to force the extra period, then gave up the first eight points of the first overtime before coming back again.

The second overtime had five ties, the last coming when Deron Williams hit a jumper with 3:44 seconds left.

But the Jazz wouldn't take the lead again, and Wade sealed it with a pair of foul shots with 44.4 seconds left—tying his career-high in scoring on a day when he passed Alonzo Mourning to become the franchise's leading scorer.

Wade added 10 rebounds and nine assists, Jermaine O'Neal added 28 points and eight rebounds, and Mario Chalmers scored 23.

Williams led Utah with 30 points and 13 assists, and Kyle Korver notched a season-high 25 points.

Timberwolves 108, Bobcats 100

At Minneapolis, rookie Kevin Love scored 22 points, and Rodney Carney and Ryan Gomes added 21 each as Minnesota snapped a five-game skid against Charlotte and handed the Bobcats their third straight loss.

Gerald Wallace had 26 points to lead Charlotte, whose skid follows a team-record, six-game winning streak.

The Bobcats entered the day one-half game behind Chicago and Milwaukee for the last eight Conference's final playoff spot.

Bulls 97, Hornets 79

At Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 27 points and John Salmons added 24 as Chicago pounded reeling New Orleans despite needs to outrag-ebull its Chicks foul.

Back home after an 0-3 road trip, the Bulls wasted little time taking it to a Western Conference contender. They went on a 19-8 run that made it 48-26 midway through the second quarter and added another 17-0 burst that bridged the third and fourth quarters, sending the Hornets to just their second loss in 11 games.

Spurs 88, Rockets 85

At Houston, Tony Parker scored 26 points, and Tim Duncan added 15 points and 12 rebounds as San Antonio beat Houston.

Parker also had eight assists and Michael Finley added 17 points for the Spurs, who came up with some defensive stops in the final 15 seconds to beat the Rockets for the 12th time in the last 17 meetings.

Ron Artest scored 25 points and Yao Ming had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Rockets, who've lost two straight home games after winning the previous 22.

Nuggets 107, Clippers 94

In Denver, Nene and Reneldo Balkman each had a double-double to help the Nuggets spoil Marcus Camby's return to Denver.

Balkman scored a career-best 22 points to go with his 11 rebounds—his second straight double-double...and Nene scored 17 points and pulled down 10 rebounds.

Camby struggled for 11 points on 5-of-13 shooting and pulled down 11 rebounds. AP

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All About Image

Mickelson, Watney tied for Doral lead

MICKELSON

DORAL, FLORIDA—PHIL MICKELSON hit a 3-under 69 but he couldn't shake Nick Watney, who finished off a 67 with a tough par save on the 18th hole to share the lead after three rounds of the GA Championship on Saturday.

They were at 16-under 208, with no one else closer than four shots.

Mickelson had birdie putts inside 12 feet on eight consecutive holes—including a tee shot on the par-3 15th that rolled against the flag stick and stopped a foot away—until a solid tee shot on the 17th hole led to bogey.

Watney, who won at San Diego a month ago, stayed in the game with two good bunker saves and a deft one chip to three feet after flirting with the water on the 14th hole.

Tiger Woods was thrilled with how he hit the ball, disgusted with his putting, and had to settle for a 68 that left him nine shots behind and in a tie for 19th.

This is his first stroke-play tournament since winning the US Open last summer. Woods had issues making knee surgery a week later.

Jeev Milkha Singh of India (69) and Camilo Villegas of Colombia (69) were tied for third at 212, another shot behind included Jim Furyk (69), Kenny Perry (71) and Alvaro Quiros, the big-hitting Spaniard who had a 68.

Mickelson, who won two weeks ago at Los Angeles, ran close in on No. 1 in the world ranking by capturing his first World Golf Championship title.

He stumbled on the front nine with a tee shot into the water on the par-3 fourth for bogey and a three-putt bogey on the seventh. But starting with a tee shot into 10 feet on the par-5 ninth, he couldn't miss.

Somehow he did miss on the 18th.

His 8-iron landed in the middle of the green and rolled right for the cup. It bounced off the middle of the pin and deadened to the left, leaving him a tap-in birdie. But he missed three birdie chances inside 10 feet, and one from 15 feet on his final hole. AP

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Morada • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Bill wants BIR abolished, new agency formed

Entity to absorb Customs' revenue-generation function

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORMER CHIEF OF THE Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and now lawmaker Lawyer-way-Vinzons Chato has revived a proposed "drastic" measure to abolish the revenue agency and create a new one that would absorb the Bureau of Customs.

In a letter to Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves, Chato said she filed last Feb. 23 House Bill No. 6085, which provides the creation of the Philippine Revenue Authority (PRA) from the merger of the BIR and Customs.

"With this proposed law, our country's tax administration is sought to be improved and professionalized," said Chato, who represents the lone district of Camarines Norte.

The government is hard-pressed to increase its revenues as it expects to spend this year P177.3 billion more than what is available in the national budget.

The bill "shall reorganize and integrate the current BIR with the newly

BILL WANTS B4

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Lopez group to block** takeover of Extelcom /B4

■ **BSP urges banks** to be more prudent /B10

SMC pursuing telecom venture through Liberty

By Doris C. Dumlao

DIVERSIFYING FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONglomerate San Miguel Corp. will push through with its foray into the lucrative but highly competitive telecommunication sector despite the aggressive entry of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) Globe Telecom Co., seen by stock analysts as a stumbling block to its access to a potential broadband gold mine.

In fact, San Miguel may be able to finalize its acquisition of Express Telecommunication Co. (Extelcom) within the next 30 days and likewise proceed with its plan to take over a controlling stake in Liberty Telecom Holdings Inc., San Miguel president Ramon Ang said in an interview with the INQUIRER on Saturday.

Contrary to some analysts' view, Extelcom's broadband highway through its power lines is not an integral part of San Miguel's strategy in the telco business. This business is seen as a potential gold mine as using such technology can provide households with internet services just by connecting to the existing electric lines of the country's biggest power retailer.

"We won't need Meralco. The close business is just a small component of the telco business," Ang said. "Liberty will be one of the best telcos in the country," he added.

He said San Miguel could present Liberty to a leading telco provider in the country with voice calls and SMS running the core businesses.

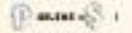
When he proposed to the Meralco board to use its electricity lines to offer low-cost internet service to households, Ang said it was a business he wanted for Meralco itself and not for San Miguel. He said the conglomerate would benefit from Meralco's increased revenue stream from the Internet/data business as a shareholder.

"It will improve San Miguel's investment value in Meralco since it's Meralco getting involved and it's not powerline and not San Miguel," he said.

SMC/B4

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



As of 5 p.m., March 13, 2009

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(For stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks seen rising this week

SHARE PRICES SHOULD GAIN NEXT week, led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., analysts said Friday.

"There's an upward bias, especially with PLDT up again in New York," Ricardo Puig of ATR-Kim Eng Securities told Dow Jones Newswires.

The company saw its American Depositary Receipts rise 0.2 percent to $47.74 overnight Thursday, above the closing price of PLDT common shares here Friday of P2,145 or $44.24.

For the week to March 13, the composite index lost 64.06 points or 3.2 percent to 1,898.10.

Average daily volume rose to 1.3 billion shares but value fell to P1.8 billion compared to 853.6 million shares worth P1,003.0 billion the previous week. AP

Our failure: Enforcement and implementation

WE OFTEN HEAR IT SAID THAT we of the Philippines have no lack of good plans, programs, policies and laws. Our one problem lies in enforcement and implementation. An example, we pride ourselves as being among the first in the world to have formulated a national strategy for sustainable development after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, with our Philippine Agenda 21. We've had eminently crafted 40-year Medium Term Philippine Development Plans (MTPDPs) for at least three decades now. We often claim that we have a more mature legal framework for protecting business (bats, say, China and Vietnam, feed on our sacred faith.

And yet our environmental situation is not something particularly worthy of consolation. Our economic performance has benefited from earth-poverty-busting technologies and relocation-and health industries worsened in recent years. And are Kobe-certainly losers at exerting a lot less business than China and Vietnam). There are, to my mind, at least three things (Except in our way) (1) We do not enforce our laws, (2) our governments departments and agencies have gross difficulty with coordination and teamwork and (3) the laws themselves have inconsistencies and flaws that undermine their proper enforcement.

Nonenforcement

From simple traffic rules to laws against graft and corruption, offenders simply manage to get away with it, often with impunity. One often feels that our system actually reinforces, rather than deters, violations of the law, such that the obedient and compliant are the ones who lose out. Drivers who stay on their proper place on the road are the last ones to get through. There are too many "open secrets" of bigger corruption and tax evasion, of which the recent World Bank debarment of seven firms is just the latest manifestation.

Law enforcement failures are particularly rampant for (but certainly not limited to) environmental laws. An example is the persistent incursion of commercial fishing vessels within the 15-kilometer zone reserved by the Fisheries Code to small artisanal municipal fishers. Another is the persistence of illegal logging in both inland and coastal habitats. The problem in many cases is that powerful political interests are either behind or directly responsible for the incursions. The issue then commonly boils down to the misconduct culture of corruption in government.

Coordination pitfalls

Development challenges usually require interagency, multisectoral and multidisciplinary approaches and solutions. The Philippines has actually been at the forefront of establishing coordinative and consultative mechanisms to deal with sustainable development and other governance concerns. But coordination difficulties persist, particularly because governments have always been organized along distinct sectoral lines. Even then, overlapping and duplicating functions across government departments and offices are common.

A prime illustration of the lack of coordination is the confused state of our land administration system, something already discussed before in this column ("Losing boss land," 2.12.07). In the Philippines Environmental Profile in 2000, the European Commission in the Philippines observed that "there is a complex situation of overlapping of agencies and laws. There are also multiple standards for land valuation, which offer ample opportunities for corruption." The problem still persist, and one land administration and management scenario is the need of an overhaul that

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+ Concern for others especially the needy, poor, sick
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SMC pursuing . . .

Ang said the entry of the PLDT group led by Manuel V. Pangilinan into Meralco should likewise perk up the value of San Miguel's investment in the electricity distributor. As such, he said San Miguel would keep its shares in Meralco or a long-term investment.

As seen in news about Pangilinan's entry into Meralco broke out weeks ago, the stock market turned jittery on San Miguel's shares as investors feel the new ghostopoly would be unable to get any synergy from Meralco's power lines and thus PLDT would get the gold mine for itself.

The logic feels but words appear to give up most of its value to the PLDT group, which will end up controlling 30.1 percent of Meralco.

Meanwhile, Ang said San Miguel was now conducting a due diligence audit on Petrokem and would likely close a deal in 30 days. Petrokem is a joint venture of Marubi Holdings Inc. and Digital Fund Development and Magnus Holdings Inc., whose shareholders also own broadcaster UMA Network Inc. (See related story on Page B4.)

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Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

March 31, 2009

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article III of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on Tuesday March 31, 2009, at 9:00 A.M. for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders on April 03, 2008
5. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31, 2008 incorporated in the Annual Report
6. Approval and confirmation of all acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI
7. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors
8. Election of External Auditors and fixing their Remuneration
9. Directors' Bonus
10. Other Matters

In accordance with Article XII of the said Amended By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from March 01, 2009 to March 31, 2009. Only Stockholders of record as of March 01, 2009 will be entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting.

It is will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 18th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila not later than 5:00 PM. of March 20, 2009. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 24, 2009 at 4:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and the papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. AQUINO

Corporate Secretary

Sweetspots

in Spotlight at

PANA Meet

For advertisers facing challenging times, PLDT presents an exciting digital signage solution.

PLDT's Raul N. Cristian talks to the PANA members on "Understanding the Filipino Consumer in Times of Crisis"

PLDT Domestic Data Category Product Specialist Amy Angeles-Lamig discusses benefits and features of Sweetspots at the PANA meeting

Attendees check out Sweetspots at the entrance of Hard Rock after the meeting

PANA President Clarissa V. Cunilla opens the meeting at the Hard Rock Cafe in Manila

At boards are under pressure during hard times. During defensive changes are been made more up on the activity list. Families learn to do without. Consumers either reduce their consumption or switch to a cheaper brand. The resounding battle cry as the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) general membership meeting at the Hard Rock Cafe in Makati was: how to get through the storm of the economic crisis. The consumer watchdog currently has 113 member companies and has been around since 1958, promoting consumers by keeping true to its slogan, "Truth in Advertising."

Although it's not a pretty picture that an economic crisis for the Philippines, the attendees gathered at this meeting were optimistic who still see a silver lining in the dark clouds. However, eight Guest speaker Raul "RJ" Esmero, Managing Director of the PDEI, gave a talk on Understanding the Filipino Consumer in Times of Crisis. At the PLDT-sponsored PANA meeting, RJ Esmero pointed out that for everyone and more especially the huge Philippine town class, consumer lifestyles are readily downgraded as household purse strings are tightened daily. Advertisers are therefore challenged to fight not just for consumer mind-space but for consumer spending as well.

The studies of more people joining the ranks of the unemployed across the world is scary and palpable. Member companies like Unilever shared insights on how cost-saving on the production line secures consumer affordability and ultimately, loyalty. Offering consumers more low-cost options such as "sachet marketing" amounts to huge savings.

Resilience and resourcefulness has always gotten Filipino consumers through the toughest of storms. We're impressed with bargains and deals, especially as inflation threatens to creep up.

We in spite of all this penny-pinching, comparison, and frugalness closing shop left and right, the doom and gloom of a long dark global recession. RC Nielsen reported that Philippine advertisers still spent 171 billion pesos on ad media in 2008. In almost every business meeting or boardroom discussion, it's always about how best to cut costs and offer the best price in consumers' minds.

Digital signage on the rise during hard times

In all truth, there is little it pays to include digital signage solutions like Sweetspots in the media mix. Traditional media such as print, television, and radio enjoy strong reinforcement from digital signage solutions. The managed end-to-end solution presented by PLDT Domestic Data Category Product Specialist Amy Angeles-Lamig at the PANA members offers a great way to inform, entertain and reach the right market. Designed for time-specific promos (perfect for penny-pinching times like these) and point-of-purchase advertising, Sweetspots is the new media to be the.

What makes it even better for advertisers is how content can be managed and updated from PLDT's central (CMS) Content Delivery Management Server using a dynamic solution that reaches the intended target audience and "hit the spot" at the right time and place. Sweetspots ensures that advertisers get their message across without wasting a single centavo of their limited marketing budget.

"Consumers behavior changes during a crisis. People will prioritize the basic necessities. So your money during the long dark recession is not necessarily your direct competitor, but maybe other categories," explained Raul Esmero.

Lopez group to block takeover of Extelcom

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacuna

LOPEZ CONTROLLER MARFIL Holdings Corp., a shareholder of Express Telecommunications Co. Inc., said it would fight to retain a 40-percent stake in Extelcom and oppose a potential takeover of the telecom firm.

Marfil is owned by Bayan Telecommunications Holdings Corp., the telecommunications arm of Benpres Holdings Corp. BTHC's operating arm is Bayan Telecommunications Inc. or Bayan.

The Manila Bayan group issued a statement with respect to reports saying Extelcom shareholder Tuason Digital Xund Inc. was selling its rights in Extelcom to the San Miguel group for an undisclosed amount.

The acquisition has not been finalized, sources said. San Miguel president Ramon Ang earlier said San Miguel was nearing the completion of its acquisition of Extelcom.

In its statement, Marfil said "it would pursue all legal remedies to reverse the illegal dilution of its shares in the telecommunications company."

Protracted legal battle seen

Marfil lawyer Ariel Tabayan said that Marfil will "prepared to go all the way to the Supreme Court," a signal that the other parties should prepare for a protracted legal battle.

"Marfil was deprived of its property in clear violation of the Corporation Code that requires the vote of shareholders holding at least two thirds of the outstanding capital stock. Here can corporate rehabilitation be abused to deprive a shareholder of its property without its consent," Tabayan said.

Marfil alleged that Tuason Digital was considered a "ruthless investor" that never funded Extelcom and merely intended to "wrest control of ... Extelcom and derive for itself economic profits," citing data it obtained from local courts.

"It now appears from published reports that Tuason Digital did precisely that by selling all its rights in Extelcom to the San Miguel group for an undisclosed profit," Marfil-Bayan said in its statement.

Marfil claimed that Tuason Digital entered into a deal with Millicom Cellular S.A., a foreign corporation and a minority shareholder in Extelcom.

Tuason Digital acquired Millicom's shareholder advances in Extelcom. Tuason Digital then prepared a rehabilitation plan that provided for the conversion of those advances into equity to control more than 50 percent of Extelcom.

In order to implement the plan, the capital stock of Extelcom had to be decreased and then increased, resulting in the dilution of Marfil's shareholdings to 9 percent from 46 percent, Marfil said.

Tuason Digital said in a separate statement that Bayan's alternative rehabilitation plan would benefit only itself to the prejudice of its bigger shareholders.

Plaridel J. Rebol II, counsel for Tuason Digital, said in a statement that Bayan's plan was primarily designed to enhance its own operations. He alleged that Bayan wanted to use Extelcom's assigned frequencies in a scheme that did not really aim to revive Extelcom.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
As of March 13, 2009

BDO raises P3B in tier 2 notes

BANCO DE ORO UNIBANK INC. RAISED P3 billion in fresh funds for expansion from a sale of debt notes qualifying as tier 2 or supplementary capital.

In a statement Friday night, BDO announced that its recent tier 2 notes offering was successfully concluded, with demand for the notes attracted orders reaching almost P5 billion or twice the announced issue size of P2.5 billion. BDO had to increase the issue to P3 billion when the offer period lapsed last week.

The bank's tier 2 notes were priced at 7.5 percent a year. They carry a 10-year maturity with a call option on the fifth year. The reason BDO has the right, but not the obligation, to redeem the notes on the fifth year or otherwise pay a higher price to investors.

"Retail investors took up majority of the allocation, indicative of the notes' appeal to individuals searching for investment options for their long-term savings," BDO said.

"The transaction attracted domestic market liquidity with an order book from both retail and institutional investors," it added.

The transaction is the third issuance of lower tier 2 notes by BDO completing the one-year capital program approved by the Shanghai Securities Exchange in 2008. The program was meant to support the bank's planned business expansion.

The fund-raising was arranged by British banking giant HSBC. — Doris C. Dumlao

Bourse eyes broker anonymity in trades

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange has adopted a new rule that protecting the anonymity of stock brokers when executing trades in a bid to attract more liquidity and move in line with global best practices.

Under the current system, the broker codes of buyers and selling brokers in every matched trade are displayed in the trading screens of market participants. The PSE's view is that when market players know who is buying and who is selling, investors may tend to be more cautious of the possibility of "front-running" or unnecessarily having higher execution costs.

Front-running refers to the unscrupulous practice of a stock broker buying—whether directly or through another broker—ahead of a client who has placed an order to buy at a certain price while prices are lower than the order price.

"This policy also improves investor confidence because an investor will face lesser risks that his orders will be the market. Their orders would be disclosed only if they trigger the limits prescribed under our existing rules," PSE president Francis Lim said in a statement.

Lim added that the investing public, especially institutional investors, would also benefit as they can remain anonymous in their buy-sell intentions without drawing unwanted attention.

"We would like to assure the public that broker anonymity shall in no way affect our surveillance operations. Our surveillance department will continue to have access to data on broker identifier which they use in investigating and monitoring any illegal trading activity in the market," Lim said.

But some critics said the measure would aggravate, rather than contain, front-running. "With all matched trades posted, it's easier to catch whether a broker is doing front-running. It will be harder to detect once this rule is in effect," a veteran stock broker said.

Bill wants BIR abolished, new agency formed

From page B1

revenue functions of the BOC into one revenue authority," she explained.

Similar bills had been filed in previous Congresses, but these were not passed into law.

Chatto said her bill takes off from related experiences of eight other countries—Canada, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, The Netherlands, Ireland, Spain and Great Britain.

She said the common feature of these countries' efforts was the goal of improving the effectiveness or efficiency of revenue collection.

"There must be economies of scale by combining the personnel, administrative and legal functions of each of the Bureaus, which deal with many of the same taxpayers," she said.

The bill also assigns the Department of Finance—currently the parent agency of the BIR and the BOC—to lead the development of tax policy and to "strengthen its capability for high-level analysis of the tax regime."

As to part, the proposed BIA is tasked to lead the maintenance as well as implementation of the tax policy.

While the DOF would retain only the revenue-generating functions of the BOC, the bill provides that the servicing agency be renamed Philippine Border Services Agency to reflect the changes in its functions and powers.

Chatto said the bill was based on Canada's so-called "Separated Revenue program" model, which integrates all support functions of the revenue and customs bureaus and creates a single network while maintaining a separation of customs work and tax administration.

"The proposed law might be seen by some as drastic, but it becomes more of a necessity in these times when the competitiveness of governments are measured by how well it manages its bureaucracy," she said.

Chatto made a name for herself as a revenue administrator when she was BIR commissioner during the administration of President Ramos in the 1990s.

In the course of her term, the BIR was able to increase by as much as 20.5 percent the collection in 1994 to P187.5 billion from P145.9 billion in 1993.

Back then, BIR's achievements helped push the tax effort to about 16 percent, which the DOF is currently striving to push above 14 percent.

The tax effort refers to the ratio of tax collection to gross domestic product or the total output of goods and services within the country at a given time.

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US mining firm plans PSE listing

By Doris E. Dumlao

NEVADA-BASED SOLA RESOURCES INC., a US-listed mining exploration firm, plans to list on the Philippine Stock Exchange to take advantage of a "knowledgeable" domestic investor base in the country.

Anand Nagin, a financial consultant for Sga Resources, said in a briefing last Friday that the company had started discussions with PSE officials on the proposed dual listing on the board/boards.

He said the company looked at other Southeast Asian stock exchanges but picked the Philippines for its potential secondary listing for two reasons.

"Firstly, the PSE and its current leadership have a stellar reputation throughout financial circles. Secondly, our listing would [make Sga] one of the first companies that is listed elsewhere to be listed on the PSE," Nagin said.

If the PSE approves Sga Resources' bid for dual listing, it will be the first foreign company with no interest in the country to be listed.

Other foreign companies listed on the local bourse like Investacorp grants from Life Financial Inc. and Manulife Financial Corp. have listed operations.

Nagin said despite the relatively thin liquidity in the local asset market compared to other Asian bourses, there was a "ton of capital" available and investors were well-versed on mining enterprises.

Based on its papers with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, Sga Resources is a start-up, pre-exploration stage company engaged in the search for gold and related minerals. It has a 100-percent interest in the Vatulo-Sotil Claim in the Republic of Fiji.

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We find ways

INFOTECH

Face of RP getting clearer on Google Map

By Raquel P. Gomez

JUST HOW FUN AND ADDICTing mashup maps-online can be?

The engineering student Wayne Bill Manuel, who started on Google Map Maker (www.google.com/mapmaker) in September last year, the activity is so engaging that it has become another preoccupation.

Manuel has devoted many hours before the PC putting details on areas where he lived and grew up in. He started mapping his neighborhood in Quezon City and later did vast map details for Tagaytay City, Angeles City, Baguio City and Metro Manila.

His "map edits" on Google's online tool, which allows any user to become an instant cartographer, has reached 5,662 entries and these map details have now become part of Google official online map (www.map.google.com).

Other top Filipino Google Map Maker contributors such as call center agent Bernard Arellano III and courier businessman Dolly de Leon have likewise did the map the from scratch such as Iloilo City, Tagaytay and Angeles with hundreds of details. Their entries have also become part of the Google Map.

Growing interest

Since Google introduced the map maker last year, online map making activity among Filipinos has seen a dramatic rise, putting the Philippines in the top 5 countries engaged in Google map making worldwide, according to Derek Collins Google Southeast Asia marketing head.

Its said map edits or entries made by thousands of map enthusiasts in the Philippines had exceeded 300,000 but there were still many work to be done.

"The Philippines is more than 7,000 islands and it's still a long way to go. Because of the collaborative efforts of local map enthusiasts, we are beginning to see the 'physical face' of the Philippines getting closer now than for the global community to see," Collins said.

Several Philippine cities and provinces, mainly in Luzon and Visayas, are now "populated" with details in the Google map.

Google introduced the online mapmaker tool to encourage map enthusiasts worldwide to fill details like roads, bridges, airports, landmarks and even establishments in the maps of their cities.

Collins says Google Map Maker answers the need for comprehensive and high quality maps and it also encourages people to create local data particularly in hard to reach areas.

"It started out like a big jigsaw puzzle with many pieces missing. But when I saw the roads, street names and landmarks coming together, I felt happy for my country and it encouraged me to contribute even more," said Manuel.

Useful information

"Collaborative map making" has helped 29-year-old De Leon operate his courier business well. With a pen, paper and a GPS device on his hand, he hiked many parts of Tagaytay and Augusto and started noting down exact house fronts, streets and establishments – details which he eventually included in the Map Maker.

"I run a small courier business. The problem has always been the wrong addresses I am getting, particularly in many towns in Mindanao. The maps I made eventually helped my business to make accurate deliveries."

For 12 days straight, Arellano aka "Mahogani.coast@" has added tens kilometers of roads, 32 business listings and changed four features of Pasay Island.

"I do map edits because I wanted to help promote the places that I goes up to and the country as a whole to the rest of the world. My mission continues and I hope more Filipinos will join us in Google Map Maker to improve the online map of our beautiful country."

FILIPINO Google mapmaker carries

World's smallest music player talks to you

APPLE HAS INTRODUCED THE all-new iPod shuffle, the world's smallest music player at nearly half of the size of the previous model, and the first music player that talks to you. The revolutionary new VoiceOver feature enables iPod shuffle to speak your song titles, artists and playlist names.

The third generation iPod shuffle is significantly smaller than a AA battery, holds up to 1,000 songs and it comes in ten with all of the controls conveniently located on the earphone cord. With the press of a button, you can play, pause, adjust volume, switch playlists and hear the name of the song and artist. iPod shuffle features a gorgeous new aluminum design with a built-in stainless steel clip that makes it ultra wearable.

"Imagine your music player talking to you, telling you your song titles, artists and playlist names," said Greg Joswiak, Apple vice president for iPod and iPhone product marketing. "The amazingly small new iPod shuffle takes a revolutionary approach to how you listen to your music by talking to you, into making it the first iPod shuffle with playlists."

iPod shuffle is based on Apple's incredibly popular shuffle feature, which randomly selects songs from your music library. And now, when you can't remember the name of a song or an artist playing, with the press of a button, iPod shuffle tells you the name of the song and artist. iPod shuffle can even tell you status information, such as battery life. With the ability to hold up to 1,000 songs and the VoiceOver feature, you can now easily switch between multiple playlists on your iPod shuffle. iPod shuffle can speak 14 languages including English, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese and Turkish.

THE NEW iPod Shuffle comes in black and silver.

The new iPod shuffle comes in silver or black and features a sleek and ultra-wearable design with a built-in stainless steel clip. iPod shuffle is the smallest music player in the world and is incredibly easy to use. Just one simple control tells you everywhere you go. iPod shuffle features up to 10 hours of battery life.

The third generation 4GB iPod comes in silver or black for a suggested price of P9,190 through the Apple Store (http://store.apple.com/ph) and Apple authorized resellers. It comes with Apple ear phones with remote and the iPod shuffle USB cable.

Say goodbye to frequent phone battery charging

STAY CHARGED FOR UP TO ONE month through KP199, a multimedia mobile phone from LG Electronics.

This phone offers talk time of up to 11 hours and standby time of up to 30 days through a high capacity battery of 1350mAh.

"While it's probably not the first thing that consumers think about when buying mobile phones, prolonged battery life, or in some cases the lack there of, is a major concern among mobile phone users," said Raymond Hernandez, brand marketing head of LG Electronics Philippines.

"LG KP199 is our answer to delivering a powerful handset, fully loaded with multimedia functions and long battery life that will definitely appeal to our customers," Hernandez added.

LG KP199

Great audio, camera

With a powerful built-in speaker, KP199 allows you to experience great sound.

This handset also comes with an mp3 player that allows user to store his favorite songs for playback and an FM radio that can even be recorded.

KP199 has an easy-to-use camera feature that, coupled with reliable battery life, takes away the worry about missing out on capturing those memorable shots.

Bluetooth is also available allowing for easy synchronization of devices and share files and photos wirelessly. With a Micro SD card slot, the phone can be hooked up for more storage space.

Mobile tracker

Like other LG GSM phones, KP199 is loaded with the AutoText® Mobile Tracker. If someone tries to steal your phone and insert another GSM card, the phone automatically sends an SMS message to the two pre-stored numbers, warning the stolen phone's IMEI number and the new SIM number without the new user's knowledge. Also, messages are sent to the two numbers after every 12 hours or whenever the phone is used.

LG KP199 is sold for P8,000.

Beating office theft with PLDT Watcher

THERE ARE MANY UNDETECted theft in companies because there's no one watching 24/7.

PLDT Watcher promises to put an end to this.

This practical and innovative solution uses proven technology, combined with the network of Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co., to help keep an eye on businesses.

Using IP cameras, motion detectors and reliable software, it gives the user remote viewing capabilities through any computer or 3G phone; snapshots and auto-recorded videos delivered sent by e-mail; and a 24-hour monitoring power over three business seven days a week. It's frankly a dream many business owners have been praying for.

Office theft takes many forms. Unproductive hours due to over breaks, unscheduled breaks, cheating—whether face to face or through internet messaging, "texting" or personal phone calls—cut the company of supposed output.

Using office supplies and equipment for personal reasons is another form of office theft. Misuse of office supplies can be spotted in some people's bags and the guard may search employee bags but they are, but this is definitely time consuming.

With PLDT Watcher, business owners are now assured of a cost-efficient way to protect their business from insider theft without spending much and without worrying of paying additional employee cost and benefits.

Epson offers large format printers

EPSON, A KEY PLAYER IN DIGITAL imaging, launched two new large format printers, heralding a new standard in the packaging and proofing printing markets.

The twin Epson StylusTM Pro 7900/9900 (64 inch) and Stylus Pro 4900 (44 inch) are the company's first 11-color printers. These printers are able to print with all 10 colors simultaneously, a first in the industry.

The engine behind these printers is Epson's re-engineered 11-channel Micro Piezo print head. It is able to deliver perfect spherical dots with high precision for consistency and image resolution of up to 2,880 dots-per-inch (dpi). The print head spans 360 nozzles per inch for each of 11 color ink cartridges.

The thin film Piezo print head enables the Epson Stylus Pro 7900/9900 to hit printing speed of 40m² per hour. At 81 (720x720 dpi) professional print rez Epson's premium glossy photo paper can now be closer in less than 15 minutes.

With Micro Piezo print head technology Epson's new UltraChrome[TM] HDR ink, a high density resin coated pigment ink formulation with three level black ink technology—photo black, light black and light light black.

This new 11-color ink set includes the colors cyan, light cyan, vivid magenta, vivid light magenta, yellow, orange and green. Printers also benefit from a new "auto switching" feature between matte black and photo black, when printing on matte or glossy media respectively.

The UltraChrome[TM] HDR ink produces gradations to skin tone areas, while delivering smoother tonal gradation from shadows to highlights, excellent sheet-to-sheet color stability, massive color control with neutral black and white, and high gloss levels on water resistant prints.

Epson printers' high capacity ink cartridges (350 and 700ml) promise to reduce the need to frequently replace cartridges.

Stylus Pro 7900/9900 features Epson's innovative Look Up Table (LUT) technology that uses advanced algorithms to calculate and translate RGB colors into CMYK prints for precision and consistency with the original image.

The LUT technology delivers seamless transitions between different shades of color for the most natural and accurate replication of the widest range of colors.

The retail prices of Epson Stylus Pro 7900 and Stylus Pro 9900 are P360,500 and P399,900, respectively.

No capital infusion for BSP in '09, says Teves

By Russell W. Dumaoy

INJECTING MORE CAPITAL INTO the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is not part of the government's spending plans this year as this would bring up the fiscal deficit to an "unconfortable" level, according to Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves.

When the BSP was created in 1993 to replace the old Central Bank that went bankrupt, the government committed to infuse into it P93 billion in capitalization.

The government has so far injected P40 billion. Teves said there would be no additional funds at the moment because it could not accommodate a further increase in the budget gap.

In February, the government's economic managers agreed to keep deficit spending at P377.2 billion or 2.2 percent of this year's assessed gross domestic product, which is the total output of products made and services rendered within the country.

For the latter part of 2008, the target deficit for 2009 was pegged at P40 billion and was subsequently increased to P100 billion on account of reported spending to stimulate economic growth.

Teves said additional capital infusion for BSP was not among things considered when the latest deficit goal was set.

"We have to do product about our deficit level considering that we have a debt-to-GDP ratio of 38.4 percent in 2008," he said.

The finance chief said this was the highest such ratio among the more advanced economies in Southeast Asia, where the average is 36.6 percent.

While the deficit programs of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore aim at an average of 4.3 percent of GDP, Teves said the Philippines' 2.2 percent was deemed locally conducive considering its high debt-to-GDP ratio.

Economic managers said the increased deficit target would allow the government to spend more for critical infrastructure and social services projects.

RP seeking UK aid for services roadmap

Talents, products, services for promotion

By Abigail L. Ho

HOPING TO CAPITALIZE ON ITS WEALTH of creative talents, the Philippines is seeking the aid of the government of the United Kingdom to fund the formulation of a creative services roadmap that will allow the country to ultimately unlock services it can offer to the world.

Bangko Sentral Undersecretary Eloi Carballo said some of the focus areas for the roadmap included animation and gaming, but it would also cover filmmaking and other creative industries that the country could export.

"Our thrust, really, is to develop new talents. Roadmapping is all about identifying talents, the products and services that they produce, and the specific areas that they can offer to the world," he told reporters.

"We want to focus on talent development for higher-value services, but we have no funding at all for this. The last study we did years ago was funded by the International Trade Centre of Geneva," he added.

For the planned creative services roadmap, he said the focus would depend on the scope of the study to be conducted, as well as the amount that the British government would be willing to provide.

He said the amount had already been made with the British Council in Manila, but a concrete deal had yet to be forged.

"The British Council actually did a limited roadmap in Cebu. Why Cebu? Because there are a lot of designers there," he added. "But we want to do a nationwide roadmap because we want to recognize the talents that are here, so we can inspire young people to emulate them."

He said developing the local creative industries would enable the country to move up the value chain from hardcore process outsourcing to knowledge process outsourcing.

To do this, the country could take advantage of its highly skilled human resource base, he said. An educational system responsive to the global services market would also help address the mismatch of skills and market needs.

BPI sees remittances growing

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MALAC BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE Islands (BPI), the country's biggest banking channel for overseas Filipino remittances, has downplayed the gloom economists' projection of a sharp decline in the remittances to flow into the year.

Despite the lingering global financial turmoil that resulted in a major global downturn, the Philippines can still attain a modest growth in remittances or, at the worst case, match the inflow last year, BPI president Aurelio Montinola III told reporters.

"From my point of view, remittances will be flat to slightly positive this year. The first two months had been good for us," Montinola said.

Based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' report, remittances received through the banking industry hit $14.4 billion in 2008, up by 13.7 percent from year-ago level. Remittance inflows entered through the banking system continued to exceed $1 billion monthly.

For this year, the BSP projected that remittances would hit at least $16.4 billion or the same level of 2008, banking on the diversification of deployed workers as well as the increased number of Filipinos employed in seaman-related sectors.

"All foreign investors had a (remittance inflows) will drop by about 20 percent. We think that's extreme. We will just wait and see. Maybe always told the first quarter will be robust but the first two months hasn't been that bad," Montinola said.

He said BPI would like to see its banking re- remittance unit better handle expand by double-digit growth.

"The financial system is liquid and banks are willing to lend. "In fact, BPI launched last week a nationwide "auto cashout" campaign in order to help an unemployed overseas drawn up demand for new vehicles.

"The auto [program] is critical because you can't have a diversification spreading," he said. "On lending, there will always be demand because there will be people who need houses. What will be impacted is the OFW who is buying a house," he said.

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NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF SAN MIGUEL BREWERY INC.

Ichiro Holdings Company, Limited (the "Bidder") has agreed to purchase 6,965,623,600 common shares of stock of San Miguel Brewery Inc. ("SMBI") owned by San Miguel Corporation ("SMC"), representing approximately 61.64% of SMBI's total outstanding common shares (the "Private Shares") for a cash price of P 10,922,474,543.20 or P 9.60 per share under the sale terms and conditions set forth in a sale and purchase agreement (the "Private Agreement"). On good-closing basis, SMC will continue to own approximately 31% of SMBI's total outstanding capital stock. The public owns the remaining 969,111,000 common shares in SMBI representing approximately 8.79% of the outstanding capital stock of SMBI (the "Public Shares").

Thus, the Bidder on March 6, 2009 filed a Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") and the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE") pursuant to Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code in connection with the Bidder's intention to purchase the Public Shares. The Bidder commences in the form of the attached Offer from SMC (the "Tender Offer Shares"). The price for the Tender Offer Shares, payable only in cash and to be set Settlement Date, will be P 9.600 per share (the "TO Price") which is equivalent to the price paid for the Private Shares of P 9.6041 per share.

The Tender Offer shall commence at March 16, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. and ends at April 17, 2009 at 12:00 noon (the "Tender Offer Period"), unless extended by the Bidder with the approval of the SEC. The sale and purchase of the Tender Offer Shares pursuant to Section 19 of the Private Shares shall be by way of block sale to be conducted through the facilities of the PSE which will be executed on April 20, 2009 (the "Settlement Date"). The TO Price shall be payable in Philippine currency in cash only, net of any taxes, and shall be paid by the Bidder to tendering shareholders through the facilities of the PSE seven trading days after the Settlement Date. Should the Settlement Date fall on a holiday, or non-trading day, the payment of the TO Price shall be made on the next succeeding business day.

The Tender Offer Shares tendered shall be deemed accepted by the Bidder on said Settlement Date subject to the conditions that: (i) a minimum of 969,111,000 Tender Offer Shares are tendered by either the Bidder or SMC pursuant to the terms of the Private Agreement or other similar offer conditions pursuant to which the Bidder was offer the Tender Offer Shares as provided in the Private Agreement, have been satisfied or waived or made into a post-closing condition, to the Bidder shall have delivered all original documentary requirements and the Bidder's payment of the TO Price either by the Bidder or the Philippine Tender Offer Shares before the expiration of the Tender Offer Period, and title to the tendering shareholder's shares in the Tender Offer Shares shall be transferred to the Bidder before the expiration of the Tender Offer Period. The Bidder has the right to withdraw the Tender Offer if any of the foregoing conditions is not met to its satisfaction, provided that the written notice of withdrawal of the Tender Offer shall be sent to the shareholders on or before the Settlement Date.

The Bidder shall, at its sole discretion, have the right to reject in exceptional circumstances for tender shares (the "Application"). Each Application is received after the end of the Tender Offer Period, or is not complete/properly or lacks any other requisite attachments or if the signature affixed therein cannot be authenticated by SMBI's Stock Transfer Agent, tendering shareholders whose Applications have been rejected, in whole or in part, shall be entitled to withdraw such tender the TO Agent on or before the Settlement Date.

The Tender Offer Shares tendered may be withdrawn by the tendering shareholder at any time during the Tender Offer Period, but only up to Friday, April 17, 2009 at 12:00 noon, by submitting a written request to the tendered Tender Offer Shares to the TO Agent, together with a copy of their Application and the Acknowledgement Receipt issued by the TO Agent. The Bidder shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to determine the validity of the written request.

Tendering shareholders who hold stock certificates ("Scrip Shareholders") should submit, within the Tender Offer Period, their duly-endorsed stock certificate(s) and the duly accomplished Application together with the requirements stated therein, to the TO Agent at the following address: No. 888 Mc Kinley Road, Makati City, Philippines 1220.

Tendering shareholders whose shares are lodged with the Philippine Depository Trust Corporation ("PDTC") (Scripless Shareholders") should instruct their broker/dealer/custodian bank to electronically transfer their shares to the TO Agent for receipt by the TO Agent prior to 12:00 noon of April 17, 2009.

The TO Agent shall make the check for the TO Price either by (i) crossing and/or making available for pick-up at the TO Agent's office in exchange for the tendered Tender Offer Shares to the tendering clients or (ii) by remitting shareholder's who have delivered certificated shares directly to the TO Agent. Checks shall be available for pick-up at the TO Agent's office beginning the Settlement Date up to 30 days thereafter. Thereafter, checks shall be mailed to the delivered to the shareholder's address per his/her/its application form. Tendering shareholders shall have the right to withdraw his/her/its Application for the tendering shareholder, any and all such funds held and charged that shall be for the account of the tendering shareholder, all shall be delivered by the TO Agent from the total TO Price payable to the shareholder.

Ichiro International (Hongkong) Limited has confirmed that sources are available to the Bidder are sufficient to satisfy full acceptance of the offer.

Shareholders are advised to read the Terms of the Tender Offer and SEC Form 19-1 filed by the Bidder with the SEC. Copies of SEC Form 19-1 and the Application may be obtained by Stock shareholders from the TO Agent. All questions relating to the Tender Offer for SMB Shares may be directed to: MTM Kim Eng Securities, Inc., 17/F Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines 1200, Telephone No. (632)8189888, (632)8189889 (Contact Person: Mariele S. Bolipata).

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Banks' NPL-to-total loans ratio down to lowest level since '01

By Michelle F. Barro

THE EXPOSURE OF COMMERCIAL AND universal banks to bad debts dropped in December to its lowest level since 2001, which monetary officials said was an indication that the global crisis had so far weathered the way Filipino consumers and companies service their loans.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the nonperforming loans-to-total loans ratio of universal and commercial banks in the country improved to 3.32 percent in December last year, better than the 3.75 percent registered in November and the 4.48 percent in December 2007.

The latest NPL ratio was also the lowest since October 2001, when the figure posted at 10.01 percent. The BSP said the Asian financial crisis of 1997 led to the steady increase in banks' soured loans until the fourth quarter of 2003.

The NPL ratio in December was a result of the P668.39 billion worth of bad debts and P22.3 trillion in outstanding loans.

Data from the BSP showed that the decline in the NPL ratio in December was due to both the fall in the amount of bad debts and the rise in outstanding loans. Soured loans as of December fell from P92.66 billion in November, while the total loan portfolio rose from P21.47 trillion.

The BSP also said the banks posted improvement in their nonperforming assets-to-total assets ratio in December 2.2 percent from the previous month's 2.3 percent, as they were able to dispose of more bad assets.

NPAs are composed of mixed loans and real properties acquired from delinquent borrowers. These include sold assets of disposal units or special purpose vehicles and dacion.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. earlier said the country's banking sector remained resilient amid the financial meltdown in the United States and other advanced economies, which has evolved into a global crisis.

While the financial sector in advanced economies suffer from liquidity woes, actively preempted banks in eighteen credit, Tetangco said banks in the country remained adequately capitalized and were conditionally lending to the public.

The BSP, however, admitted that some banks had started making their credit standards stricter, protecting themselves from possible increase in bad debts arising from the adverse impact of the global turmoil on incomes.

Some banks have increased collateral and down payment requirements to support loan applications, the BSP said.

The BSP said it had implemented measures aimed at encouraging banks to maintain a healthy level of lending that would support economic growth. The BSP said credit was important especially at this time when the domestic economy needed a boost to keep afloat despite recession in advanced countries.

The BSP earlier increased its budget for rediscounting from P40 billion to P60 billion.

No tax relief seen for consumers, business sector

By Russel W. Domingo

THERE WILL BE NO TROUBLED MEASURES that may help households and firms survive this year, observers believe, the Philippines is expected to feel the worst of the global financial crisis, Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said.

"The government cannot afford any tax relief because we would like to spend more," Teves said. "The deficit in 2009 is expected to be P177.2 billion or 3.1 percent of gross domestic product."

Teves was responding to questions from representatives of the Chamber of Thrift Banks, who asked whether there would be measures that would help members like urban banks being done in United States.

Teves gave a talk during the CTB's annual convention on Friday at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Makati City.

"What we need is to increase the efficiency of our collections and extract that tax lost as possible to the public in terms of better services and assistance," Teves said.

He said collection must increase because the Philippines' tax effort was only 14 percent of GDP—the total output of goods made and services rendered in the country at a given period—while the average in Southeast Asia was 16 percent.

Supplementing tax relief would bring down the effort, which would push down the country's credit rating and, in turn, would make borrowing more expensive," Teves added.

In fact, the Department of Finance has already notified down its tax effort projection for 2009 to 14.3 percent of GDP from 14.7 percent amid expectations of lesser inflation and lower economic growth.

In February, Teves said this year's fiscal effort is even aimed at financing a bigger deficit and reducing the country's debt burden amid tight financing conditions.

He said the government wanted is to increase the level of spending for irrigation, clean water and infrastructure, as well as the quality of education in public schools and quality healthcare.

No free lunch

From page B1

would require consolidation of functions currently lying within several land registration and administration agencies, which in turn fall within at least two government Cabinet-level departments (DENR and DOJ).

Flaws in laws

Some of the difficulties of past years stem from inconsistencies and ambiguities in the laws themselves. Among the most numerous and legislations pertaining to the environment has been the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 (RA 7942), whose constitutionality had been questioned at, and later affirmed (but not completely) by the Supreme Court. Another complex problem has been the inconsistency of certain provisions of the same Mining Act with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (RA 8371), which recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous peoples to ancestral domains and lands, their right to self-governance, economic and social rights, and their cultural integrity, including indigenous cultures, traditions and institutions. However, the Mining Act is invoked by investors and certain government offices in allowing mining exploration and development activities in areas that would otherwise be barred from such by the laws.

From the above, the picture that emerges is one where the appropriate elements of a strategy and action agenda for the pursuit of sustainable development in the country would seem to be largely in place. The main barrier, however, to achieving desired outcomes and impacts is shortcomings in institutions and mechanisms—and in the people comprising them—for translating strategies, policies and programs into concrete actions. Until we overcome our failures in politics and governance, meaningful progress forward would continue being a formidable challenge indeed.

Comments welcome at chabby@manila.edu.ph.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Sealed applications for eligibility and bid documents for the procurement of consulting services, including the supply of ballot paper, automated maintenance services using AMS (election/precinct tabulation), training, technical support, maintenance, deployment, installation, configuration, integration, and overall project management, to be used in the automation of the Counting, Transmission and Consolidation of Votes for the May 10, 2010 Synchronized National and Local Elections, consisting of:

- Component 1 – Paper-Based Automated Election System (ABS)
  - 1.A. Election Management System (EMS)
  - 1.B. Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS)
  - 1.C. Consolidation/Canvassing System (CCS)
- Component 2 – Hardware for Electronic Transmission of Election Results using Public Telecommunications Network
- Component 3 – Overall Project Management

shall be received at the Comelec Session Hall, 2nd Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, on February 16, 2009 until 10:00 a.m. at which time, date and time, and sealed bids shall be opened in the presence of the members of the Bids and Awards Committee, representatives of the Commission on Elections, Commission on Audit, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Makati Business Club, Philippine Computer Society, the participating bidders and the public, who are hereby invited to witness the opening of the bids. Bids received after 10:00 a.m. of February 16, 2009 shall be returned unopened.

Bid documents may be obtained starting 10 March 2009 to 31 March 2009, during office hours from the Office of the Commission Secretary, Comelec Intramuros, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable amount of 1,000,000.00 pesos. A Special Power of Attorney must be executed by the prospective bidder, should he choose not to appear in person at the bid opening. The prospective bidder should designate a representative or assure the bid documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on 27 March 2009, at 10:00 a.m. at the Session Hall, Commission on Elections, 2nd Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.

Deadline for submission of the letter of intent/application for eligibility and bid documents (preferred 10:00 a.m.) is the morning of March 31, 2009 at the Commission on Elections, Palacio del Gobernador, Comelec Intramuros, Comelec Legal Division, Intramuros, Manila. Late applications shall not be accepted.

The COMELEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formal defect contained therein, and accept the bid most advantageous to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. Likewise, it reserves the right to review the qualifications of the bidders during the bidding activities and conduct subsequent should such review uncover any change in the situation of the bidder as originally evaluated by the subcommittee of such statements, the COMELEC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice and forfeit the bid security posted by the bidder in favor of the COMELEC for any reason arising from his submitting the bidder in the prejudice of the bid.

ATTY. FLORENCIO S. DIMAANO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Republic of the Philippines
Energy Regulatory Commission
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Rural Electrification Project Management Office and Energy Regulatory Commission (PREPMO-ERC) invites prospective bidders to participate in the following project:

Reference Number	Project Title/ Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Time/Day of Bids	Price of Bid Documents
(XXXX) (999xxx)	Procurement of Hydrological Data Loggings and Tools	4,000,000.00	March 16 to April 6, 2009	March 26, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	April 6, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	10,000.00
(XXXX) (999xxx)	Procurement of Three (3) Units Mini-Hydro Simulator	3,000,000.00	March 16 to April 6, 2009	March 26, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	April 6, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	10,000.00
(XXXX) (999xxx)	Procurement of One (1) Unit Generator Set	1,000,000.00	March 16 to April 6, 2009	March 26, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	April 6, 2009 (10:00 a.m.) PREPMO-ERC Office, 2nd Floor, San Juan Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City	5,000.00

NOTE: All bids shall be delivered to and at San Juan, Pasig City.

Prospective bidder should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an annual cost equivalent to the approved budget for the contract. The Eligibility Documents/Bidding as stipulated in the Philippine Government Procurement Reform Act (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

All qualified bidders to Eligibility Statement and Bidding, Bid Security, Performance Security, the attorney-in-fact or Affidavit from Shareholders and Board of Directors shall be governed by the guidelines of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount to the Financial Institution.

The Philippine Government of Pasig reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality therein or accept the most advantageous to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

Bids and Awards Committee
The Chairperson
Section Head, Cash Unit
Pasig City

Approved by:
(Sgd.) FELICISIMO G. BOTANAS, MPA
BAC Chairperson

(P/C - March 16, 2009)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Energy
Energy Regulatory Commission
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

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ATTY. FLORENCIO S. DIMAANO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(Posted on the Bulletin Nov. 1 dated 14 March 2009)

(P/C - March 16, 2009)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE INTERCONNECTION AND OPERATING AGREEMENT WITH CENTRAL LUZON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE AND THE FRANCHISE AREA WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2009-XXXX

CENTRAL LUZON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CELCO),
Applicant.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on February 25, 2009 the above-named Applicant, CELCO, filed an application with the Commission praying for the issuance of the provisional authority and approval of the Interconnection and Operating Agreement with Central Luzon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CELCO) and the Franchise Area with Prayer for Provisional Authority.

In the said application, CELCO alleged, among others, that:

1. It is an electric distribution utility organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with principal office at the City of Cabanatuan, Province of Nueva Ecija, where it may be served with notices, orders and processes of this Honorable Commission;

2. It is also allegedly operating the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO), the power supply situated in Cabu, has been identified as an "orphan" with limited any market power during peak hour (between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.). Where there is a power shortage, it will have to import it from the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) and pay the corresponding charges. It is capable of 5 MVA and 10 MVA, when additional capacity from new power plants will have been installed.

The Proceedings Governing

1. These rules govern the general hearing and, in accordance with the Provincial Government and Barangay Community of Cabu, it obtained a favorable program with maximum allowable to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, which shall be construed in a fair, impartial and expeditious manner.

2. Any person who desires to participate in the said proceeding may file with the Commission a verified petition to intervene within the period prescribed in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, setting forth the nature of his interest, the reasons for his participation, and the manner in which his interest will be affected by the proceeding. The petition should state clearly and concisely the petitioner's interest in the subject matter, the facts relied upon to support such interest and the relief sought. Petitions to intervene may be filed at any time after the publication of this Notice but not later than five (5) days before the initial hearing. Petitioners shall be furnished with a copy of the petition to intervene by the petitioner.

3. Any person who is opposing the application may file with the Commission a verified opposition within the period prescribed in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, setting forth the nature of his interest, the reasons for his opposition, and the manner in which his interest will be affected by the proceeding. The opposition should state clearly and concisely the petitioner's interest in the subject matter, the facts relied upon to support such interest and the relief sought. Petitions to intervene may be filed at any time after the publication of this Notice but not later than five (5) days before the initial hearing. Petitioners shall be furnished with a copy of the petition to intervene by the petitioner.

4. Any person who desires to participate in the said proceeding may file with the Commission a verified petition to intervene within the period prescribed in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, setting forth the nature of his interest, the reasons for his participation, and the manner in which his interest will be affected by the proceeding. The petition should state clearly and concisely the petitioner's interest in the subject matter, the facts relied upon to support such interest and the relief sought. Petitions to intervene may be filed at any time after the publication of this Notice but not later than five (5) days before the initial hearing. Petitioners shall be furnished with a copy of the petition to intervene by the petitioner.

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Coffee Time, Anytime, at SM

Something's brewing at The Block.

Everybody loves coffee. From sunrise to sunset, people can't get enough of this golden, aromatic brew. Coffee is there at the start of the day at work, with clients during an afternoon meeting, all the way after work with friends. Indeed, coffee is more than a drink, it's a way of life.

That's why this March, SM North EDSA – The Block celebrates our love for coffee in the grandest way. Cafestival is a 2-month fete for all things coffee. The best brews from all over the world, expert baristas from all over the country, books and art inspired by the brew – they're all here, all this March.

A Taste of Paris.

The Avenue of The Block will be transformed into a Parisian sidewalk during the festival. Our premier coffee shops are setting up quaint sidewalk cafes for your drinking pleasure. Go people watching while you sit back, relax and enjoy a cup – just like the French do. It's a European experience, and it all happens up north.

Browse with Brews.

What goes great with coffee? Good books. That's why at the Cafestival, you'll get your fill of both. We're hosting a Book Fair during the festival and you're sure to find different books that you'd love to browse or bring home. Coffee table books, novels, comics – there're all here. It's another reason to come over and celebrate the festival.

The Art of Coffee.

Coffee making is an art, so drop by our Art Exhibit and marvel at the paintings and photos that were inspired by coffee. These exhibits make coffee not just good to drink, but great to look at as well.

Hot Coffee. Cool Sounds.

Chill out and relax as different bands give a distinct flavor and sound to the Cafestival. Get ready to kick off the festival with performances from La Escala de Sandra Maeda Guarana, Eileen Stern, and Acoustic Jive. Then, get a taste of jazz, swing and big band as the Bombol Rockers perform a 2-night concert. Next on the list is Acoustic Escapade – the group that helps you unwind with Soul and Bossanova music. And get ready to lift your spirits with the Brass Monkeys – one of the foremost names in big band jazz.

Three different bands, three more reasons to come back to the Cafestival again and again.

The Brew That's Good For You.

Coffee lovers, rejoice! Not only does your favorite brew wake you up and keep your energy high the entire day. A cup a day makes your mind alert, helps enhance your memory, and even helps delay the signs of aging. That's a lot more reasons to drink coffee and keep on coming back to the festival.

Get your fix at The Block.

March 14
4:00 pm ..... La Escala de Sandra Maeda Guarana & Eileen Stern
6:30 pm ..... Acoustic Jive

March 14 – 27
10:00 am ..... Coffee Art: Photo and Painting Exhibit; Book Fair

March 15 – 16
4:00 pm ..... Bombol Rockers

March 21
4:00 pm ..... Acoustic Escapade

March 22
4:00 pm ..... Brass Monkeys

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The DPC Yellow Pages offers a comprehensive list of businesses for people who are looking for specific products and services. As a matter of fact, they use the directory more than twice a month*.

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*Image Attitude Image research study conducted by Ambiga in November 2008

BSP urges banks to be more prudent

Foreign credit ratings not reliable

By Michelle V. Remo

CITING THE FAILURE OF CREDIT-RATING agencies to detect the risks posed by US subprime derivative products, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has urged local banks to conduct their own due diligence on investment instruments before purchasing them.

The BSP said the global crisis was enough proof that credit ratings were not 100-percent reliable, and so banks must not depend entirely on these when deciding on what investment products to buy.

"It is clear that there has been a failure of credit ratings. Credit-rating agencies gave triple-A ratings to those instruments, even if those included junk assets, just because they were issued by 'triple-A institutions,'" said BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, referring to the derivative products sold to the public that eventually fueled the global turmoil.

He spoke on Friday during an economic forum organized by the Chamber of Thrift Banks and held at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City.

Economists said the global crisis started out as a problem contained within the US banking sector. US banks lent out heavily to the public, even to the subprime readers, and were later on saddled by soured loans. The subprime market refers to borrowers with a spotty credit history.

Some financial institutions packaged the subprime loans into other assets to form derivative products, which were sold to corporate entities, like insurance companies and individuals.

When many subprime borrowers defaulted on their loans, banks ran out of cash and investors suffered huge losses.

The financial meltdown in the United States, which has spilled over to other advanced economies where financial institutions have heavy exposure to the subprime market, resulted in a credit crunch.

Banks have become reluctant, if not incapable, to lend in the public and to each other.

Guinigundo said one lesson learned from the ongoing global turmoil was that credit ratings sometimes fail, and so the investing public must be responsible in making investment decisions.

The BSP said the Philippine banking system so far remained generally healthy despite the global economic turmoil.

Banks in the country have managed to post decent profits. They also continue to lend and have so far kept their bad assets to a minimum.

PDIC to no longer cover deposits with 'absurd' rates

THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE Corp. (PDIC) said bank deposit products with absurdly high interest rates will no longer be covered by deposit insurance.

This will happen once the recently enacted bill amending the charter of PDIC is signed by the President.

PDIC President Jose Nograles said the new PDIC charter allows it to audit deposit products sold by banks.

"Once PDIC determines that a product is structured [to ensure] that the interest rate offered is considered unconscionable], then it has the authority to exclude the guaranteed savings from the deposit insurance," Nograles said.

The provision in the new PDIC charter to exclude some deposits from insurance coverage arose from the Legacy Group scam.

Rural banks under the Legacy Group owned by Celso de los Angeles Jr. offered powerful clients interest rates that far exceeded the market average.

Some Legacy products even promised to double the depositors' money.

Given this backdrop, Nograles said the public must exercise caution in choosing the banks they will entrust their money to and the products they are purchasing.

"Banks should not be the only ones told to know their customers, but depositors must also know their banks," Nograles said.

Officials of the Legacy Group, including de los Angeles, have been charged with syndicated estafa before the Department of Justice by the PDIC and the BSP.

According to the complaints, Legacy banks swindled the public by gathering deposits and then using the money for other purposes. *Michelle V. Remo*

Napocor, PSALM ink deal

By Amy R. Remo

NATIONAL POWER CORP. (NAPOCOR) and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) have inked an operation and maintenance agreement to strengthen the consortium's outlined in the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001.

In a statement, PSALM said the agreement would enable both state-owned companies to "realize the reforms under the Epira Law."

PSALM is mandated to privatize government-owned power generation facilities and independent power producers' contracts, which are currently held by Napocor.

As stated in the Epira Law, the privatization of at least 70 percent of these assets would enable the government to implement "open access," which would allow large power users to choose their power suppliers.

The privatization level is currently pegged at 50 percent.

PSALM explained that the agreement stems from the mandates under Sec. 49 of the Epira for it to take "ownership of all existing generation assets, liabilities, independent power producers contracts, real estate and all other disposable assets of Napocor, except those pertaining to the Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG)."

The agreement likewise affirms PSALM's role to optimize "the value and sale prices of the assets transferred to it from Napocor."

For 2009, the government has lined up several plants for bidding, including the 218-megawatt Sibulan I and II diesel power plant; 192.5-MW Palinpinon geothermal power facility; 112.5-MW Tongonan geothermal power plant; and 250-MW Bauan coal-fired power plant.

BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

When Session Road blooms, Baguio grows

By Vivona Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—Session Road is again in bloom, proving once again the adage that when Baguio's main street gets busy, the mainstay capital grows.

The city chair down vehicular traffic through this busy street to culminate the yearly Panagbenga (Baguio Flower Festival) with a feature called "Session Road in Bloom."

This year, it drew the interior design samples of Mandalay-ong-based firm Design Info, the flowers of BSCC Cooperative in Benin but and the home décor of Mind Asia Benino Arts and Crafts.

City tourism officer Bonnie Albarrán said the American colonial government did something similar to draw business to the city when it was made

BLOOMS: Trees may be made of plastic, but these colorful blooms add texture layers.

RECLINING wooden chairs worth P1,300 are up for grabs.

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Aviation tourism goes up, up and away/B2-3

■ Albay suffers unkind cut in exports /B2-4

JOHN HAY entrepreneur Mae Mauca offers different kinds of edible products (left).

listed in 1909, citing unlisted people would come to stay/die.

Baguio's reputation was never popular, and it took fairs, festivals, sports tournaments and carnivals to sustain that

Robert Reed, author of the "City of Pines: The Origins of Baguio as a Colonial Hill Station and Regional Capital," said the expensive construction of Session Road and the plan to build a hill station exclusively

Abra town pays tribute to growing sugar sector

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANGUED, ABRA—THE CAPital town is shifting from bitter to sweet politics.

Mayor Dominic Valera says Bangued is slowly shedding its reputation as one of Northern Luzon's most murderous towns and is becoming more known for something sweet.

Thus, this town has been celebrating the Tuyal Festival since 2007 to salute its sugarcane industry, which has been gaining headway in the upgrade mode.

Arduous task

"The sugar industry here deteriorates the industrialization of the people of Bangued. It is an arduous task to extract juice from the sugar cane," says Valera.

The town has a wide array of sugarcane-based products like muscovado (pure, unrefined, unrecentrifuged cane sugar), tuyalnut (hardened molasses), cane vinegar and liver (sugar cane wine).

There is also bukbukan, also known as lemon candy, made from the white froth of cooking sugarcane molasses.

In Abra, residents also patronize this Ilokano and sell it as sugar.

A product Bangued produces the cascarol, which is ground glutinous rice dipped in boiling syrup.

Cascarol is harder than the regular tuyalnut.

Valera says muscovado and cascarol are the best-sellers.

He, however, says most of the buyers are remaining residents.

"Many buy as many as 20 kilos when they go back to their places," he says.

There are more OFWs coming from Bangued than most towns in northern Luzon.

Muscovado

Traders of organic products in Baguio are also courting their muscovado from Bangued.

The town is now producing different kinds of muscovado. There is the kayo-kayo, which is the roughest and darkest variety. This sells for P50 a gantang in Bangued. The white variety is known as tempay.

Silvio and Primo Rubido of Milo-Dukuan in Barangay Aglangao have say duty used to produce muscovado for their own consumption but have been making a profit since three years ago.

The season for making sugar is from December to March.

The Rubidos produce muscovado four times a week during that season.

One production equals about 10 gantas, she says.

Healthy trend

According to Valera, muscovado, which used to be known as a poor man's sugar, has become popular among the health-conscious because it does not contain chlorine, which is used in bleaching refined sugar.

"What we know as brown sugar is usually white sugar added with molasses," he says.

He says the Tuyal Festival was one way of promoting the muscovado in Bangued.

Aside from the street dancing, the festival also featured a "Sigayan" parade where the grass-made of paper-mâché performed the process of extracting sugar.

THE BEMBEDED Cupid dancers during the coronal dancing competition

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When Session Road blooms, Baguio grows

From page B7-1

for the "whites" (here celebrities from both American and Filipinos in the early 1900s.

American Governor General William Cameron Forbes had been responsible for drawing up a massive infrastructure program for the summer capital.

But Reed wrote that Forbes also took an active hand in attracting people and investments to the new city.

"The vital ingredients in his prescription for the promotion of Baguio were regular visit to the highlands, expanded property ownership in the hill stations, diversity of social life and general enthusiasm," Reed wrote.

"Forbes was especially anxious to popularize the hill station among the prominent Filipinos and was exceedingly pleased when his efforts bore fruit," he said.

Quoting Forbes' journal, Reed wrote: "After the development of good automobile roads, good bridle paths, a golf course, trap shooting equipment, a number of pleasant houses and two good hotels, as well as very fine modern and scenic, a number of cottages and a good deal of society, I felt the time was ripe to get these people up."

Reed said when Forbes was unable to attract wealthy Filipinos to Baguio through simple suggestion or invitations, he "resorted to such devices as polo matches, golf tournaments and trap shooting contests" to lure visitors.

Reed said the Baguio promotional strategies evolved through time, until the city succeeded in ideal population of 25,000.

Alhambra said tourism has been the single biggest industry that consistently occupies the city limits atop crater-like devastation at the end of World War II, disasters from the 1990 Luzon earthquake or the meningococcemia scare that drove away visitors for almost a year.

The city owes its 97 billion to 98 billion in gross revenues collected over 20 years as tourists who have been visiting the city since the 1960s.

"Tourism has such a big impact that over 80 percent of the taxes generated in Baguio come from firms catering to tourists' needs.

This is why Baguio is vulnerable to the world financial crisis because of the expected drop in tourist arrivals.

Alhambra said, however, that "there's a new plan to promote Baguio."

"There's always a plan," he said.

BENELCO Arts and Crafts sells colorful furniture and dinners.

BAGUIO'S main downtown street has been attracting investments since the early 1900s.

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Aviation tourism goes up, up and away

RP has great potential to attract tourists looking for a new thrill

Text and photos by Kenneth Pil dela Rosario

HERE'S ONE KIND OF INFLATION YOU'D want to read about.

No, it's not the kind that raises the prices of goods and depreciates the value of hard-earned money. This is the type that pumps up a hot air balloon, enough to lift it several thousands feet above the ground, up until it succumbs to the velocity and strength of the wind.

Last Feb. 22, more than 20 hot air balloons were inflated and took to the skies as part of the 14th Philippine International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta (PHAHF) at the Clark Freeport Zone.

Tourist from across the globe flew in to join the annual four-day event including delegates from Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand, Thailand, the Netherlands and Malaysia.

Showcase

"We wanted to open the eyes of everybody about aviation in the country," said PHAHF executive director Joy Roa. "It's an opportunity for us to showcase what our town is offer locally."

According to Roa, there is a bright future for aviation tourism—particularly hot air balloon flying—in the country, owing to the Filipinos' excellent service skills and natural love for being airborne. Hence the many pilots the country produces, he said.

"This is the only time where hotels in Clark reach full occupancy rates; where the highways are clogged; and the restaurants are filled," the aviation expert said.

And why not? Every year, the gathering attracts more than 50,000 spectators from all walks of life. In 2008, there were 55,000 observers who came. This year, however, Roa estimated there were 125,000 people who joined the festivities. They even ran out of tickets to sell, he said.

While optimistic and hopeful, Roa admitted there is virtually no hot air balloon industry in the Philippines today, unlike in other western countries. "That's because we lack the expertise, even though we have the infrastructure," he said.

Another hurdle, he said, might be the high cost of owning one. Roa, who first took flying balloons for over a decade now, put the cost of owning a hot air balloon anywhere between $20,000 and $200,000.

This year's festival was "much bigger and more colorful" than last year's, he said, thanks to foreign delegates who participated. This year's event was also more commercial in its third day fall on Valentine's Day.

During the event's opening ceremonies, participants and attendees alike were thankful for the calm and uneventful weather (it was sunny and there were no strong winds that threatened to halt the festival).

The sight of thousands of people losing up to watch the balloons slowly fill with air, amid the backdrop of a rising morning sun, was something to behold.

Learning to fly

The hot air balloons did not disappoint, if the loud hoots and clapping from the spectators were any indication.

Called the sky-to-the balloon seated to lift-the ground one by one, it didn't hurt that they came in different designs and styles, too.

There was one shaped like an elephant, another framed a soda bottle, the other a giant image of a mug, a telephone and a (girl's) head.

While the balloons slowly rose, spectators feasted their eyes on the paraglides and skydivers who provided an excellent air show, along with airplanes, helicopter hot-flying and ultra-light plane exhibi-

TIGHTS: It was around the world for the annual four-day event.

THE EXPORT industry in Albay is one of those affected by the global financial crisis.

BUSINESS Monday

Albay suffers unkind cut in exports

Local exporters send 70% of output to United States

Text and photos by Joanna Lyn Bolivar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—THE GLOBAL financial crisis may have started in the United States, but its debilitating effects are being felt all the way in Albay.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, export sales have been steadily declining in Albay, which is known for its abaca and handicrafts.

Dwindling orders

While export companies still receive orders from buyers, mostly from the United States, Japan and Europe, "buyers no longer place orders as have been recorded," said Rodrigo Agulto, provincial director of the DTI.

Agulto, who is also the department's assistant regional director, said the most affected were companies producing handicrafts, especially gifts and housewares.

Other traditional Albay exports are raw/semi-refined abaca fiber and pulp and paper.

Philippine export sales dropped by a fifth (6 percent last year.

Albay's export problem in Albay in 2008, the DTI had 50 registered exporters, most of which are involved in handicraft.

Now, only 20 are left.

Mergers

As much as 40 percent of the province's total exports go to United States and 30 percent to fourteen more countries.

But since these neighboring countries improve on the Philippine products and resell these to the United States, "in effect, 70 percent of our market is the US," Agulto said.

The DTI official explained that as a consequence of the global economic slowdown, two companies have permanently closed down and other families were forced to merge their companies in turn on cost.

Manila Cordage Corp., a hemp producer in Barangay Lidong, San Domingo, Albay, suspended operations in December last year because of low demand.

It paid some P1.7 million in benefits to its 146 workers, a statement from the Department of Labor and Employment said.

The company is seeking government help to identify new markets for its products, the DTI said.

Agulto could not say exactly how many workers were affected by the decline in orders since exporters do not maintain separate workers.

Hoping for the best

"Most of the workers are in the countryside villages, working in their homes," he said.

EXPORTERS are seeking government help to identify new markets for their products.

From 50 registered exporters in 2002, only 20 are left

Sabastian Benemerito, executive assistant of L.G. Benemerito Advertising Inc., said that compared to last year's production, the company's export sales have so far declined by 30 percent.

The family-owned firm exports products made from abaca and other indigenous materials, such as bags, hats, placemats, trays and baskets.

Benemerito said he hoped that the global economy will improve next year to revive the province's export industry.

MOVEMENTS

CB Richard Ellis gets new CFO

CB RICHARD ELLIS GROUP INC. recently named Robert E. Sulentic as the company's new chief executive officer.

Sulentic is an industry veteran who combines public company corporate finance experience with an in-depth understanding of the company's global operations.

Sulentic is currently chief executive officer of the company's Development Services business, and until recently served as Group President of CB Richard Ellis-EMEA and Asia Pacific operations.

In addition to his chief financial officer role, Sulentic will also serve on the company's Development Services business.

In addition, Jim Groch has been named chief investment officer with responsibility for corporate finance and strategy, which is a new position.

Groch held a similar position with Trammell Crow Company prior to his acquisition by CB Richard Ellis.

Gilbreath, who assumed the responsibilities of interim chief financial officer in late 2008, will resume his responsibilities as the company's executive vice president, chief accounting officer. Additionally, Bartlett will assume the role of chief financial officer of the company's American business.

Citi appoints new Global Banking Head

CITIGROUP INC. recently appointed Robert Sutton as head of Global Banking for the Philippines. Global Banking is responsible for the coverage of Citi's institutional clients for corporate and investment banking services, including capital markets, advisory and lending.

Sutton brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this new lead leadership role for our franchise in the Philippines. I look forward to working with Sutton as an institution to support our clients in the Philippines and those looking to invest in the country," said Citi Country Officer Sanjiv Sahay. "This new on-the-ground role underlines Citi's continued commitment to the Philippines to offer innovative solutions to help our clients grow their businesses," added Sahay.

Citi's Global Banking structure offers clients a single, unified coverage team that can deliver the best ideas, products and services in the industry. Citi announced the global integration of its leading corporate and investment bank last year. In Asia, Global Banking is led by Farhan Faruqui.

Convergys Manager elected to ACCP

CONVERGYS CORPORATION Country Manager Mitchi Zamora has been elected to the Board of Governors of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

Zamora joins an elite group of prominent executives from companies throughout the Philippines. The American Chamber's goal is to serve the interests of US businesses through the participation of members in promoting their long-term objectives, while contributing to the social and economic development of the Philippines.

"We are pleased to welcome Mitchi to the 11+ member board of directors of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines," said Robert Sears, Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

As Convergys' vice president and country manager, Zamora is responsible for overseeing the operations of Convergys' 11 contact centers and 16,000 employees in the Philippines and for growing the company's business accounts. Zamora also serves as president of the Philippine Software Association and a director of the United Cebu Associations of the Philippines.

Tecson gets award

SR. ANTONIO F. TECSON was honored by the American Biographical Institute of the United States of America with the Lifetime Achievement Award (101st outstanding contributions in the field of financial management).

His nomination was based from close examinations of his accomplishments that have significant societal improvements through business and financial concepts. It is the most significant honor of contributions with the awardee given the recognition in favour of his entire life's work and success.

The awardee graduated cum laude of the Far Eastern University in 1958. He has various banking boards, both private and government, and is a director of the Chase Manhattan Bank, Manila and V. Mapua & Co. Inc. Trust Company and Chemical Bank abroad sponsored by the Citizens Banking Corporation.

Dr. Tecson was chair of the Manila Lions Club Foundation Inc., president of the Philippine-Chinese General Chamber of Commerce Inc., and is at present the executive vice president of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants' nationwide

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We find ways

BUSINESS Monday

Give more, firms urged

By Abigail L. Ho

WHEN TIMES ARE DIFFICULT, companies need to do more.

So says Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co.

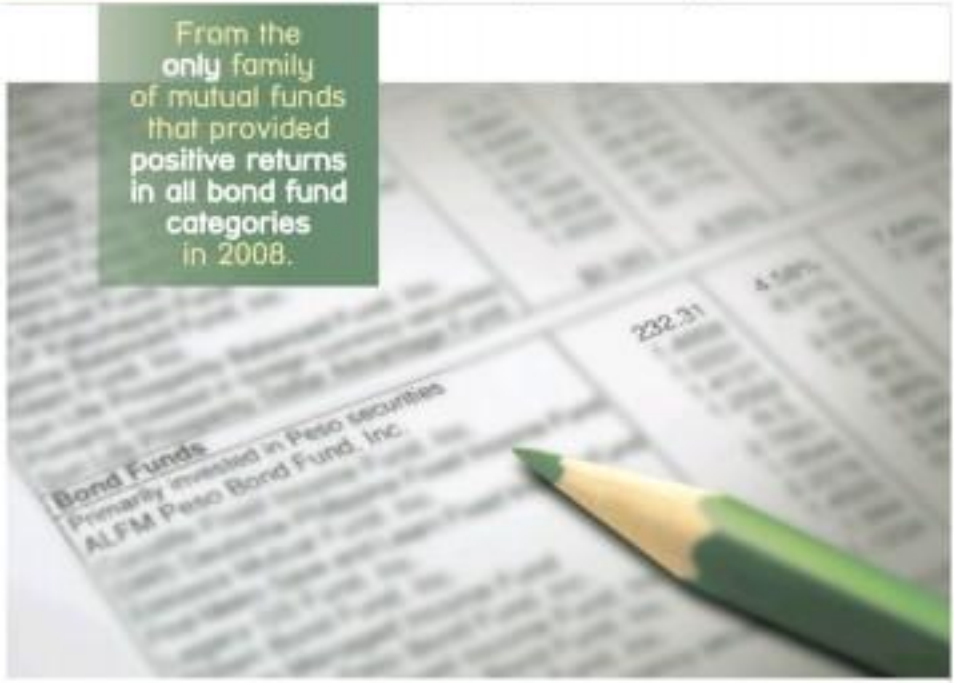
"It is precisely at this time when that support is most needed, when people are not in our streets without a job, when enlarging poverty and achieving sustainable development must not be set aside in the midst of a downturn," said Pangilinan, who also chairs the Philippine Business for Social Progress.

"With a difficult period ahead of us, we should be compelled to do more and to give more, both for ourselves and our own survival. There will be new needs and urgent calls that we must respond to, some of them outside our corporate paradigm and comfort zone. We will need as mankind as one resource and work more strategically and synergistically to help those who are most needy," he added during PBSP's annual meeting.

Pangilinan said that this was why PBSP has increased its budget for social projects this year.

For this year, PBSP plans to increase assistance through grants and financial advances to P437 million, 10 percent higher than the 2008 figure of P400 million.

(BPR, B2)



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Taking to aquaculture sector like fish to water

Philip Cruz's sea cages boon to fishermen

By Myrna Rodriguez-Co
Contributor

WHEN PHILIP S. CRUZ SET UP his first aquaculture business in 1990, he felt like fish having put back in the ocean.

It was almost the exact same way he felt when as a student, he shifted his studies from BS agriculture to BS Fisheries in UP Los Baños or BS Fisheries in UP Diliman and later when he took MS Fisheries in UP Visayas.

He liked the job he took in 1986 as nutritional technical services manager for a feed company. He enjoyed the challenge of assisting aquaculture technicians, doing extension work with farmers and troubleshooting problems in the field.

Most of all, he found it interactive and fulfilling to work closely with farmers and understand their problems first hand. He would have missed out on this if he had worked in the university or some research laboratory like many of his classmates did.

Five years later, in early 1993, he decided to put up his own business since he had direct knowledge of what farmers needed and a passion to fill this need.

His first independent project was in goldfish his first years of technical experience in a small hobbies enterprise called "Shrimp Breeding Management: Principles and Practices."

The publication was received well in the aquaculture community, and orders came from many countries. It opened the doors to several consultancy projects for Philip here and abroad.

Reality bites

When the scientific profitable shrimp industry started to decline in the early 1990s, owing to persistent diseases outbreaks, Philip's consultancy engagements became fewer and further between.

He had to look around for other opportunities.

From years in employment, he understood that feed manager was a serious problem among farmers, resulting to high cost of production and polluted fish farms.

He was in his element researching in the development of an automatic feeding device that would simply feeding management for fish farmers.

His childhood engineering skills helped. He set up a small workshop with an assistant. To improve his prototyping capability, he taught himself to use the lathe and welding machines, even taking a fiberglass manufacturing course at Technology and Livelihood Resource Center.

Philip patented his "Elastic Fish Feeder" invention a few months later and gambled on his then-paltry savings to commercially market the product.

Kinetic Feeding Systems Corp. was born in 1994 which later became Cruz Aquaculture Corp. when he diversified his business.

Values

His values as an entrepreneur were almost immediately put to test.

He was on the phone with a Filipino-Chinese supplier of plastic raw material one day. The voice on the other end of the line was telling him his plastic balls had a service life of one to two years.

"Do you have UV-stabilized grade of plastic that would last at least three years?" Philip asked.

Long silence ...

"You mean the summer 'Eh di wala ka nang negosyo!'" (Then you wouldn't have repeat business!)

For days he pondered on that conversation.

"Should I make cheap products that would have a short service life that would send the buyer back in six to one or two years," he asked himself. "Or should I go for product that is durable but is considerably more expensive?"

At the end, he chose to build and market a product with longevity and integrity.

Philip credited his success when he says cheaper, slightly modified copies of his patented products proliferating in the market. On the bright side, his Kinetic Fish Feeder won an instant success among fish farmers around the country and won him the respect of fellow engineers as well as fulfillment from being able to help his fellowmen in his own way.

In 1997, he went a little bolder. This time, he wanted to develop an all-weather sea cage for farming fish, which used to be measured in a bay-and-sheltered cove for fear of typhoons. His proposal to the Technology Application and Promotion Institute of DOST for financial assistance to implement the project was approved with a grant of a P1.2-million loan at no interest. The technology of this far more expensive cages that have been improved by affluent fish farmers, he was confident he would develop a comparable product, at a fraction of the cost.

After months of field testing, the prototype he developed in Bauan, Batangas Gulf, as nets proven to among sweets and currents, he proceeded to improve them. The big sea came in 1999 when a weather disturbance hit the area and unleashed 3-meter waves and 1-meter per-second currents. Philip's cages were barely scathed.

Hitech International Inc., in partnership with some friends, was launched the following year as a materials-equipment specialist. Hitech is today the country's leading sea cage manufacturer with over a dozen models for various applications. It is so far the only ISO 9001:2000-certified cage manufacturing facility in the country.

Commercial farming

In 1998, to allow small- and medium-scale farmers to engage in mariculture, Philip introduced commercial farming zones, with shared use of facilities, institutionalized management agreements and monitoring, and harnessed government support.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources took notice and launched the country's first "Mariculture Park" along Bauan Island in Davao Gulf on Aug. 11, 2001.

The rest is history, and there are now over 25 mariculture parks all around the country. Through the accelerated growth of mariculture, the country is now on its way to a reduced reliance on wild fish stocks and becoming a key player in the highly profitable global trade of farmed seafood products.

Philip's achievements in aquaculture won him The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award in 2000 and the DOST-PASAHOG-PAEI award for aquatic technology a year later.

(Philip Cruz's story is one of 25 featured in the UP 2020's Dreamers, Doers, Builders—Scholar ng Bayan Gives Back the Enterprising Way. For more success stories and articles on how to start and improve a business, log on to http://www.upd.edu.ph/~ssd.)

PHILIP Cruz and his product

Give more, firms urged

Turn to page B5-1

The group will likewise earmark P200-million in development bond loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), almost five times the P41 million allocated last year.

The PSDP also aims to pick up revenues by 26 percent to P460 million. Data P2bil billion last year, so it can boost grants, donations and project-related expenses by 26 percent.

The bulk of PSDP's projects for 2000 had to do with education and job generation.

For 2000, PSDP aimed to make schooling more accessible to more children, as well as improve school facilities and train more teachers, particularly in Mindanao.

The group also planned to connect 1,000 schools to the Internet by end-2000.

PSDP's new executive management program should also train 250 consumerists and 250,000 Filipinos within 2000.

In light of remodernization being done left and right all over the country and the world, PSDP hoped to generate 20,000 new jobs by coaching one to three families.

Bonifacio would also be a major thrust for PSDP this year as it aims to help prevent water-borne diseases and provide access to potable water.

₱11.3-B Automated Election System can be used to cheat

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT many people, including senators and congressmen, are under the impression that election automation would automatically lead to clean elections.

In an automated election, good old Garci-like magic can be able to employ his old tricks that there are countless computer whiz kids who could modify programs and alter votes during results electronically.

How ways to cheat

If we look at the election process, there are many ways to cheat.

1. People in power or with lots of money could buy support from local leaders or directly from voters.

No automated system can prevent this.

2. In the old days of goon and guns, voters were either coerced to vote for certain candidates or outright stung and their ballots taxed.

Pie thought: we had progressed beyond this. Unfortunately, shooting provided in 2007 in Maguindanao and role of 10501.

3. Ballot box stuffing or ballot substitution.

With the proposed Canvass/Election Canvass System, ballots would have to be substituted before these are fed into the counting machines.

This is a little more difficult, but the actual production of the fake marked ballots is a lot easier. And it is harder to identify ballots marked by one person.

4. Misreading/misallying of votes during precinct count.

Normally, OMR counting machines can be very accurate. But who can tell if the machine has been programmed for automated and undetected shading favors? Comelec has not done enough to assure the public that this will not happen.

5. Substitution of election returns (ER).

This may have happened in the 2004 elections in ARMM.

We suspect that in Pampanga, Cebu, Iloilo and Bohol, Nereford and the other parties may have been given fake ERs.

No honest, automated system would prevent the substitution of ERs with previously prepared faked ERs. But we can cover all if manipulation is done inside the OMR counting machine.

6. Substitution of ballot box and ER on the way to the municipality.

In the automated system, electronic ERs would be sent to the municipal canvassing center through the communications system.

How can we be sure that the results transmitted are not changed at the source or at the receiving end?

7. Fraud in the computation of the municipal COC.

This is hard to detect if the precinct results are not visible to watchers.

In the automated system, we will not see how computation is done in the canvassing servers. There is no independent means to cross check what the server generates.

I think that contrary to the common belief that delays create opportunities for cheating, some delays are needed for checking and reading.

In an automated election, turning too fast without checks and audits could result in massive cheating.

8. Substitution of Municipal COCs on the way to the province.

This could have happened in Maguindanao in 2004.

MAPping the Future

Manuel A. Alcaraz, Jr.

Proponents of automated systems suggest that this would be prevented with secure electronic transmission. There still is the possibility of manipulation within the system.

9. Fraud in the computation of the provincial COC.

This could have happened in 2004 and could happen again within the provincial canvassing server.

10. Substitution of COCs on the way to Congress and Comelec.

This could have happened in 2004. And even with an automated system, this could still happen.

11. Errors in computation of national total.

Counting machines

The 99.5 billion the Comelec intends to spend on the rental of 60,000 OMR reading machines will not hasten the completion of national election counting. Here the use of reading machines could hasten retail counting in powerful areas.

However, OMR voting is not a deterrent. The election, OMR voting facilitates the production of ballots.

Hazards and safeguards

Comelec would like us to assume that automation will prevent cheating.

That is not true. Let us make sure that safeguards and audits are instituted.

The OMR system is similar to the classic, paper-based election system, except that:

1. Voters mark machines of choice instead of writing the name.

2. The OMR ballots are machine-counted instead of being read and tallied.

For those who think that cheating can only take place when human hands are involved, this would look like a fixed-fee system.

Comelec's new procedure calls for each voter to physically feed his ballot into the machine.

A picture of the ballot is then taken.

As we pointed out earlier, the voter in some areas may be influenced or forced to feed another ballot into the machine.

Programmed to cheat

Let us pretend we are in a precinct where law and order prevails, and you are the voter feeding to your ballot.

How can you be sure that the machine will not change one or more of your votes?

How can you be sure that the total votes in the printed ER are truly what the voters in the clusters voted for?

The law provides for testing of the machines prior to election day.

If the machines are not manipulable, how can you be sure that a modified program was not downloaded on election day by add votes for certain candidates and subtract from other (electronic display boards)?

At the end of counting, the original program could be restored.

The Election Law should call for hand-count machines.

To verify that the OMR machines are counting properly, the two parties and the COC may also be allowed to run their own ballots before the start of counting and at the end of counting.

If discrepancies are detected, these should be noted and could be the basis for reverting to a manual count or a protest.

Safeguards

The Comelec proposes to use statistically transmit election returns from the 80,000 OMR counting machines to the municipal servers.

What is the fastest way to do it, it does not guarantee honest elections and does not provide transparency of the election counting process.

If the OMR counting machines can send electronic ERs to the municipal servers through the communications system, someone who knows the system well could change the programs on the machines from a remote and undetected location.

The best way to detect fraud is to retain and provide at least one printed and electronic copies of the ER.

The OMR Counting Machines should not be equipped with any communication capability.

There should be a separate stand-alone PC from where the ERs can be sent to the different organizations entitled to receive the seven copies of the ER.

The Comelec will does not provide for visible canvassing or parallel transmission and canvassing.

This will raise concerns about the honesty of the count and would certainly result in a loss of credibility of the results.

The Comelec should provide PCs for the major parties in each municipal tabulation center.

There should also be at least three projectors in each canvassing center.

The projectors would show the statement of vote for the municipality.

Watchers would be able to compare the projected totals on the three computers (Comelec, majority and opposition).

The COC should not be final, until the discrepancies are resolved.

There are 1,631 cities and municipalities, 80 provinces, 13 regions and two national canvassing centers for a total of 1,716 sets.

Let's provide 10-percent backup sets. That would be 1,810, let's say 2,000.

The total cost would only be P360 million.

Cost reduction

One could easily reduce the cost of the OMR Counting Machines by increasing the election day's OMR machines to 10 and allowing feeding of ballots into the machines by the BEI after the end of voting.

That would mean savings of at least P4.5 billion, which is more than enough to pay for a transparent and more credible election and canvassing system.

Hopefully, wholesale cheating could be lessened.

But let us not expect canvassing for national candidates to be done in three to four days.

(The writer reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is president of Systems Resources Consult Inc. Feedback at mag@globelines.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit v map.org.ph v :)

FEATURES IN BRIEF

PRSP begins series

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES begins its 2009 Professional Development Series with a special half-day session on "The New PR— Leveraging Digital Science to Drive Sales and Reputation" on March 19, 2009 at GMA Network, Edsa corner Timog Avenue.

Open to the public, the talk will tackle how to optimize PR— through digital means— for reputation, stakeholder and sales management, especially in the face of the economic slump.

Guest speaker is Douglas F. Horne, regional executive advisor—Asia-Pacific at Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide.

For over three decades, Buencamino worked as journalist, government information officer, trade association executive, marketing and PR counselor, agency senior manager and entrepreneur.

To sign up for the limited seating, registration fee— P2,000. Please call PRSP secretariat, Tel. Tel. 636.88.16 or e-mail prsp@info.com.ph.

Meralco organizations pass strict ISO certifications

SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS and third party surveillance audits approved that Meralco's latest technical performance identified shut-both efficiencies in terms of its environmental, safety and health management system based on ISO 14001:2004 and OHSAS 18001 standards.

ISO 14001:2004 is the international standard for environmental management while OHSAS 18001:2007 is the global benchmark for occupational health and safety management system.

Mapfre employees, agents launch CSR programs

INSPIRED BY HIS PARENTS' CULTURE OF GIVING, Mapfre Insular's employees and agents, in unity, unveiled a series of outreach programs.

The employee CSR committee of the company engaged in earning donations by by-phone-enlisted centers, supporting environmental campaigns, and conducting feeding programs for depressed areas.

Mapfre Insular senior vice president for sales operations Glenn Tolentino said that Mapfre Insular sales agents and employees initiated most of the company's outreach programs in the branches.

Caltex gives 'tools' to Davao youth

CALTEX, ONE OF ASIA'S LEADING ENERGY brands, recently launched the Ever Your TOOLS technical training program in Barangay Sasa, Davao City.

TOOLS, in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippine Association for Community and Technical Trust, and government of barangay Sasa, aims to help promote out-of-school youth and children-in-conflict-with-the-law the technical skills and tools needed to be gainfully employed.

Unlike other corporate social responsibility programs, TOOLS award tools or equipment to trainees after passing every level of learning in the curriculum, to promote and encourage service. "This makes the students equal program partners in the course of their development.

Ever Your TOOLS aims to train 150 youth participants at its pilot launch and 600 graduates within three years with a 75 percent employment success rate.

The program's sustainable nature is not only for the trainees to earn their education and tools, but schools after they have finished the course. The project intends to build an industry network where it assists said graduates and on-the-job training and where graduates may eventually be employed.

Hotels.com launches PH website

PHILIPPINE TRAVELLERS ARE MORE MOBILE than ever to "Make Us Happy" knowing that accommodation in the Asia Pacific region offers some of the best value for money in the world, making it a great time to travel in their own backyard.

In addition, the Philippine traveler now has access to the best range of value accommodations tool, even when he has a budget face-offer from best carriers.

The Hotels.com Philippines website gives video choice for any traveler with any budget.

The Autumn 2008 Hotel Price Index Hotels.com, identifies Asian cities such as Bangkok, Shanghai and Kuala Lumpur as having some of the best value accommodations or offer in the world.

The findings coincide with the launch of the new Hotels.com Philippines website, catering specifically to the needs of Philippine travellers. The site can be found at www.ph.hotels.com or www.hotels.com.ph.

The newly launched local website introduces the new Hotels.com "Make Us Happy" positioning, reflecting the company's commitment to understanding what customers want and to make it even easier for both business and leisure travellers to select and book the hotel of their choice through their Hotels.com site.

DHL gets recognition

DHL, THE GLOBAL LEADER IN EXPRESS and logistics, has been recognized for its global environmental commitment by Climate Counts. Climate Counts, a leading nonprofit organization working in collaboration with Clean Air-Cool Planet, placed DHL well ahead of other major players in the logistics industry in their environmental scoreboard.

The scoreboard motivates businesses based on their efforts to review, reduce and report their impacts on the climate.

With 67 out of 100 possible points, DHL led the competition in the logistics industry by a huge margin in all main categories.

In the field of CO2 efficiency, Climate Counts found that "DHL has established clear and absolute goals to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions, with oversight on climate actions at the highest level in the company. The company has reduced its impact on global warming (i.e. its greenhouse gas emissions or climate footprint) by focusing on investment in renewable energy and efficiency programs. The company also provides consumers with a way to take action around the use of its products and support climate-specific employee awareness programs."

John Mullin, CEO DHL Express, commented on the recognition. "It's pleasing to receive recognition for our group-wide climate protection program. We are especially proud for the only logistics company to fulfill around two-thirds or more of the requirements in the main categories, already in the first year that we are rolling out our comprehensive program GoGreen."

Philex now a gold mine

PHILEX MINING CORP. THE PHILIPPINES' largest mining company, is now more a gold mine than a copper mine, according to Dr. Nisha M. Bonoc, chair and chief executive officer.

Since the price of gold has been testing $1,000 per ounce recently, and copper prices have seen weak bouts in the last few months as a result of the declining demand in the booming market of China and countries in the United States and the like specs consistently the value of Philex concentrate shipments of gold and copper have reversed with the latter shipments now showing that gold accounts for 72 percent of the value of the concentrates while copper accounts for only 28 percent.

Since the last quarter of 2008, the gold values in the concentrate shipments of Philex have consistently outstripped the copper values.

How to derail an infra project

By Cesar B. Bautista
Contributor

ONE OF THE RECENT KEY MOVES of the government in the connection of the MRT and LRT lines to complete the circular loop around Metro Manila.

This project will connect the Quezon Ave. station in Caloocan to Princess station in Quezon City.

The 3.8-kilometer gap should not have been there to the first place if our planners had been a bit more circumspect about following the master plan made a couple of decades ago by the discredited, reactive approach of looking at one project at a time.

The National Competitiveness Council, as chaired by Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, has identified inadequate infrastructure as one of the six major causes of the country's weak competitive position.

The NCC's working group on infrastructure led by Member Cielito of the Federation of Philippine Industries and by Bobbi Bautista of the University of Asia and the Pacific, has been focused on remedies to overcome the efficient movement of people and goods.

The Supply Chain Management Association, Inc.'s Institute of Maritime Affairs and Logistics, UAP and De la Salle University, among others, are saying that competition today is not between one city/town and another city/town but between one country and another country.

Rather, the competition is being made between megacities with the implication of clusters of activities, unified services, social facilities, linked by seamless infrastructure. Greater Shanghai is a region as broad as Dumaguete in the north to Batangas in the south. The same is true for Hong Kong/Shenzhen, Greater Bangkok, Mega Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Singapore.

Somehow, multimodal logistics connecting the many activity hoods around the megacities are the common features that reduce efficiency, reduce duplications and create economies for their consumers.

Immediate spending should be focused on projects that can improve our productivity so that when the economic cycle returns to its normal condition where competitiveness is favor, the Philippines will be better positioned for economic prosperity than in the past.

Each project proponent should have an answer to the question: "How would it improve the country's productivity when the global economic cycle returns to its normal position?"

The vision that needs to be shared is to look at the "Big Picture" of seamless infrastructure projects that can be done in the medium term.

NCC's indefatigable working group on infrastructure has compiled the concerned national government policy and implementation efforts and such a "Big Picture" is finally emerging.

The major logistics projects that we are supporting are the extension of LRT1, expressways and rail ways to further points in the north (Pangasinan) and in the south (Batangas).

The number of exits that will be included in the design should be based on objective parameters and not on the political results of measures or hunches/opinions.

If these workable projects are held captive to political rubrics, the "Big Picture" will be splashed with patches of colors (red, black, brown, pink, etc.), which will convert it to an abstract painting.

The failure to get our act together does not paint a pretty picture for Philippine competitiveness. (The author is co-chair of the National Competitiveness Council.)

WORLDBEX attracts over 100 exhibitors

Construction firms see green

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

FOR THE BILLIONS AND COMstruction industry going "green" has become somewhat of a mission.

It's not enough anymore that the products used to construct buildings do not cause undue stress to the environment. Today, designers and architects are also employing their considerable skills to build more energy-efficient homes and buildings.

Reflecting a more environment-friendly theme, this year's Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition (WorldBex), the biggest and most attended construction show in Asia, promises to introduce the latest advancements in the field of sustainable development.

Architects and design innovations that use organic and recycled materials will also be featured in the trade show.

With the theme "Leading the way to sustainable development," the annual event that will run from March 19 to 22, at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, marks WorldBex's aim to help foster a more environment-friendly construction industry.

"With the help of the industry's most influential movers and shakers, we can together strengthen the impetus to go green," said Joseph dog, president of WorldBex Services International.

"Together, we can come up with solutions and resolutions to build in the most sustainable way possible," he said. "Pushing for sustainable development seems to be the right, not to mention the most pragmatic, thing to do."

Now on its 14th year, WorldBex has been steadily gaining a foothold in the industry. It is even considered by many as an indispensable source of information and technology in the world of construction.

Last year, the trade show featured 322 exhibitors occupying 800 booths from at least 20 countries.

This year, organizers of the four-day event expect to top them ourselves.

"WorldBex has become a venue where people who never knew each other, or knew each other but never got to compare notes, share best practices with each other, and build connections, too," said Edmund Hontanosas, one of the event organizers.

The ALFM Family of Funds

For investors who are looking for affordable and growth-oriented investments that can be their partner in achieving future financial goals, they can rely on the products offered in the Philippine mutual fund industry — the ALFM Family of Funds.

The ALFM Family of Funds boasts of the first fund portfolio in the Philippine mutual fund industry that offers a true multi-currency group of funds: the ALFM Peso Bond Fund, the ALFM Dollar Bond Fund and the ALFM Euro Bond Fund.

The ALFM Family of Funds allows investors to diversify their investments at an affordable cost by pooling their funds with other investors and participating in the investors' choice of Fund. Whether in Peso, US Dollar, or Euro currency, these mutual fund funds are invested in a diversified portfolio of fixed income securities including Philippine government securities as well as prime domestic and foreign companies. The Funds also enable investors to benefit from professional fund management without paying costly fees.

And with the expansion of the ALFM Family, the ALFM Growth Fund, more fund investors can further leverage into the growth potentials of equity-based funds. ALFM Growth Fund is an actively managed balanced fund which invests in a combination of high performing stocks and fixed income securities.

With a wide spectrum of mutual fund risks appetite, investors in the ALFM Family are given convenient access to professionals who are prepared to advise them on the benefits, risks, and features of mutual funds investing.

ALFM PESO BOND FUND
Selected Fund Features

ALFM Peso Bond Fund is an open-end mutual fund for investors with a medium- to long-term investment horizon. The investment objective of the Fund is to generate a steady stream of income through investments in a diversified portfolio of high-grade peso denominated fixed income instruments. It is the only mutual fund in the country that provides a free life insurance coverage of PHP20,000.00 to eligible individual investors maintaining at least ₱100,000.00 in the Fund.

Base Currency	Peso
Minimum Initial Investment and Maintaining Balance	₱25,000.00
Minimum Additional Contribution	₱5,000.00
Management Fee	1.00% p.a.
Minimum Holding Period	90 days
Early Redemption Fee	1.00%
Custodian Bank	UBP

ALFM DOLLAR BOND FUND
Selected Fund Features

The ALFM Dollar Bond Fund is an open-end mutual fund also denominated in U.S. dollars. The Fund invests in a diversified portfolio of high-grade U.S. dollar-denominated fixed income securities issued by the Philippine and major foreign governments, as well as by prime local and foreign corporations and financial institutions.

Base Currency	U.S. Dollar
Minimum Initial Investment and Maintaining Balance	$1,000.00
Minimum Additional Contribution	$500.00
Management Fee	1.00% p.a.
Minimum Holding Period	90 days
Early Redemption Fee	1.00%
Custodian Bank	UBP

ALFM EURO BOND FUND
Selected Fund Features

ALFM Euro Bond Fund is an open-end mutual fund denominated in Euro currency. The investment objective of the Fund is capital preservation with returns and inflows derived out of investments in primarily foreign currency denominated investment securities which provide the Fund a steady stream of fixed income. The Fund is suitable for foreign currency investors who do not yet have a Euro fund in their investment portfolio.

Base Currency	Euro
Minimum Initial Investment and Maintaining Balance	€25,000.00
Minimum Additional Contribution	€5,000.00
Management Fee	1.00% p.a.
Minimum Holding Period	90 days
Early Redemption Fee	1.00%
Custodian Bank	UBP

ALFM GROWTH FUND
Selected Fund Features

The ALFM Growth Fund is an open-end mutual fund for investors with a long-term investment horizon. The investment objective of the Fund is to seek long-term capital appreciation from an appropriate mix of equity and fixed-income securities.

Base Currency	Philippine Peso
Minimum Initial Investment and Maintaining Balance	₱50,000.00
Minimum Additional Contribution	₱5,000.00
Management Fee	2.00% p.a.
Minimum Holding Period	90 days
Early Redemption Fee	1.00%
Custodian Bank	UBP

MARINA MAKING WAVES

The MARINA 2009 10-POINT Program

Her Excellency
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

Hon. Leandro R. Mendoza
Secretary
Department of Transportation
and Communications

Hon. Maria Elena H. Bautista
Administrator
Maritime Industry Authority

ALL SET TO SAIL!

Maritime Industry Authority Launches its 10-Point Safety and Efficiency Program

PORT

Process Operations Review Taskforce task unit to thorough review and validation of business processes and systems in relationship of the Division, Shipping Office, Domestic Shipping Office, Shipyard Regulations Office, Maritime Safety Office, & Management Development Office. The review aims to harmonize major lines and simplify/streamlining to eliminate unnecessary steps from and simplify/streamlining to eliminate unnecessary steps from and/or duplicative, redundant steps from steps and/or objects' many tasks.

SHIP

System Harmonization For Instant Payment mechanism on single-point payment system. Accessible through Land Bank online collection facilities through its 24/7 interactive nationwide, this online processing of fees issue and tasks.

CAPTAIN

Comprehensive Administration Portal Technology And Information Network provides customer-to-web based application with upgrade and interactive to about MARINA's business, monitoring services, procedures, fees and charges, and announcements. This portal also contains many online links with other government agencies, as well as regional and national trade organizations available.

BOAT

Business Online Applications and Transactions enrollees at single access with an online application system. The system will have the most transactions, including the facilitation of Shipping Companies, Importation of Ships, Letter to Sail, Vacation Positions / Authority of Ships, Validity and Cancellation Certificates, Maritime Safe Manning Certificate, Certificate of Philippine Registry, Certificate of Public Convenience, and Special Permits available online.

SEAS

Call Center Service
(02) 527-4722
www.info.com.ph

SIRB Express Application System allows seafarers to apply for SIRB through an all online service at (02) 527-4722. Information status, status, allow for about point up and delivery will be addressed there. An application program is also available online through www.info.com.ph. Simple online fees amount is. Special requirements is smooth, regular application processing.

AZUL

HOTLINE NUMBER
2985

Azul 2985 is MARINA's new 24 hotline available via text. It is a virtual help desk which provides everyone with vital information and real-time data. The allows the seafarer free capability to text in feedbacks, suggestions, compliments, or queries. Reports on any observed violations happening in a ship can also be made by seafarer.

SEE RORO

SIRB Evaluation Enhancement Roll-Out to Regional Offices in the enhanced medical benefits plan and the Seafarers Health Alert System. Combining the state of the art technology, it implements the use of a digital picture capturing in the new MARINA Regional Offices. Photos will now be printed out with personal identifiers to reduce the risks of SIRB tampering.

MASTERS

MARINA Awards for Safe Travel, Excellent and Responsible Service is an award system that celebrates the stakeholders of the industry. People within the MARINA Regional Offices and the maritime industry stakeholders within the MARINA's national jurisdiction for the following categories: Overseas Shipping Company, Local Shipping Company, Overseas Manning Company, Large Shipbuilder/Shiprepairer, Small Yard/Medium Shipbuilder/Shiprepairer, Multimodal Seafarers Training Center, Master Of The Year, and Vessel Of The Year.

WAVES

Wide Area Verification and Enforcement System assists with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), PNP Maritime Group, Bureau of Customs of the Philippines (BOC-NAIA), and Coast Guard Auxiliary (CGA) as a disposition after government's agencies on monitoring compliance of ship owners, in office and sea. This empowerment will ensure compliance to the maritime rules and regulations promoting the safety of all.

FAIR HERO

HOTLINE NUMBER
2985

FAIRHERO is the passenger empowerment program that promotes the safety culture in maritime transport. Anyone can be a hero by reporting any illegal acts/violations in a ship via text to 2985 (SEND). The report will be relayed/endorsed immediately for validation to the authorities. Valid reports will earn the reporters a reward of P10,000.

www.marina.gov.ph

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Arts and Books Editor Lito B. Zulueta

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

IN THIS ISSUE
Raymond Legaspi's new works /C3

From Recto to Machado and Neruda, MRT is now one great poetic ride

STORY ON PAGE C4

INSTITUTO Cervantes director Jesús R. Rodríguez welcomes MRT train commuters to the launch of "Versos en Metro," a Spanish promotional reading campaign. Looking at the poetry posters are National Historical Institute chair Ambeth Ocampo, MRT head Roberto Lastimoso, Sen. Ed Angara and Spanish Ambassador Luis Arias Romero.

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JOJI ARIERA

FUGGO BARDY — BY FFL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHOOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHOCHOLIS

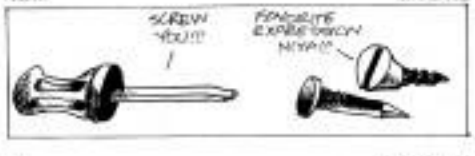
JAMES BOND

DOUBE COMEDY — BY ITSVAN RABUZSKI

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBSY — BY LISA CARCELLANO

TUBOK — BY MARK COIL

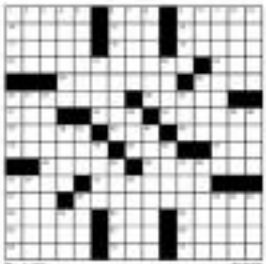


KIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ANDRA

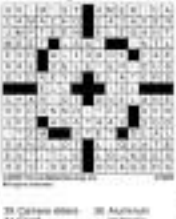
MEN — BY DARRIN WILTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Jo Vita
Ocean City, FL



Saturday's Puzzle Solved



ACROSS
1 Wolf down
5 "Ed" Lee's catch
9 Native Israeli
14 Lawn or Nassau
15 ___-Ca-Ca
16 Bite out
17 Tire large in scale
18 Reckoning unit
19 National Gallery architect
20 Southernmost city in Nevada
22 Sunrise direction
23 Glacial epochs
25 Suffix meaning "Italian"
26 Alabama and Idaho
27 "Over There" org.
28 Richard Gray
29 Online hookup
31 Beans really, briefly
32 Achievement in oil
41 Nonsense noise
42 Ancient Andean
43 Call for help
44 Lumber cut
45 Bottle opener
46 Ring-ear-jingle
47 Inspires
48 Bottle-necklace
52 Poem passage
56 Tiles on Street
57 Wheel's pivot
58 Nightmare remedy
59 Animal company
60 Cougar relative
61 Stuffed
62 Hurricane
63 Future fish
64 Jamaican dialect
65 Drive-around benefits
66 Lisa
67 Talking ice

DOWN
1 Unlucky
2 Moment's view
3 Rotter dozen
4 Sketch
5 Wedding ceremony
6 Wall bracket
7 Bridge choice
8 1982 James Wilder movie
9 Abandoned
10 Eternity
11 Virginia Tech location
12 Mountain or Mutt
13 Ski enthusiast
21 Evening in Granada
24 Future D.A.'s exam
30 Pressure sign word
31 Star of "Simply Irresistible"
33 Intangible quality
34 Neighbor of Windsor Haven
35 Then now
36 Rule of gold
38 Ark. neighbor
39 Garnish
40 Cameras eldest
41 Crowd
42 Here's yet
46 Go head Gold
48 Felix and Polly
49 Square
50 Salicylic
51 Tide that time
54 One exchange
55 Aluminum company
56 Jokes for
58 Singer Cole whose
60 Cable
61 OLED and LCD
62 NYC subway line

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOR BORN TODAY: For the second year in a row, Mars, whose nature is most associated with action, will be retrograde in your sign. Therefore, this year should be more introspective. Because you are inherently very active, you may find it difficult to slow down. Instead, you will have to learn to do so. Your year should be focused on self-care. You may be depressed because of this.

TUESDAY (Leon Redbone, 59; president, Palau; Hallowe'en, ancient Celtic holiday): Be careful not to overdo it today. Don't push yourself too hard. Don't take on more than you can handle. Don't overextend yourself. Don't overdo it. Don't overdo it. Don't overdo it

Raymond Legaspi turns into circus ringmaster in new show

By James P. Ong
Contributor

IS "THE CIRCUS SHOW BY RAYMOND Legaspi," about the cast of Philippine pop culture: politicians, fashionistas and party animals. The exhibit, to be held this month at Ayala Museum (rd. no. 757-7117 to 21), started as a reaction to a televised hearing at the Senate on government scandals, as well as the prevalence of bodyguards in media. "It was an annoying media circus. I thought that these people were showing," says Legaspi, a former newsboy classmate who trained his hand on 20 years of advertising to become a full-time painter.

And so he began painting clowns. But unlike traditional harlequins who are always portrayed as jesters, Legaspi paints them offstage: sipping coffee, cheering contestants, having a glass of wine. "There are regular images for many people, but quite unusual beauty and unexpected for clowns," says Legaspi.

The 20 works on exhibit suggest that clowns are people too.

Legaspi, a Fine Arts graduate of the University of Santo Tomas, and the 2008 Philippine Art Awards Artist's Choice, has been presenting award exhibits at the Ayala Museum's Artefspace since 2007. He began with the well-acclaimed "Bardo" series, which depicted monstrous women wearing the traditional kimonodress in personal spoofs, sometimes carrying wicker fans. This was followed in 2008 with "Raymond Legaspi Does His Things," inspired by the popular Boris Johnson in the 1970s in the Philippine province of Negros Occidental.

In "The Circus Show by Raymond Legaspi," the artist takes a respite from his usual inspiration—the garnered ills in the province—and tackles subject matters that are more serious, including negative Philipino traits such as passing the blame, scapegoating, abuse of power and opportunism.

It is a new take on social realism, with Legaspi's highly visual rendering and subdivided use of color presenting a cleverish and comical—though never cartoonish—observation.

Visual wit

Legaspi, who has always said he makes art that puts smiles on people's faces, succeeds in impressing the viewer with his visual wit. He pokes fun at Manila's overdressed fashionistas in homages bold colors and dashing patterns in the floral costumes, as he has done in previous exhibits, he uses his subjects' clothes as a secondary canvas to show another design or story.

In "The Circus Show by Raymond Legaspi," he uses a show of comic and theatric devices—feather boas, big hair that look like tentacles, clothes that are garish, loud, and almost blinding. Yet he finds something fragile and vulnerable beneath all that kitsch, and he lets that seep through. "I liked the idea of clowns as people who have to do things because it's their job, even if they don't like it. These people also have emotions, problems, families. They live around lives outside their jobs. They are still very human."

There is a clown in all of us, he believes. the clown that tries to a relic and performs for other people. "I wanted the viewer to see themselves as people they know in the carnival," says Legaspi, who will also be exhibiting in June at La Belle Bassboil and in August at Montemiran Art Gallery in Singapore.

"HAPPY Hour"

"RABBIT In Love"

3 young artists explore Dante's poetry

INSPIRED BY THE GREAT ITALIAN POET Dante Alighieri, three young artists, Nikki Alleyn, Dang Seeing and Mike Tecson, all recently out of the graduate school, "Divine Comedy," and from it weave their own stories in the art exhibit "Cantos."

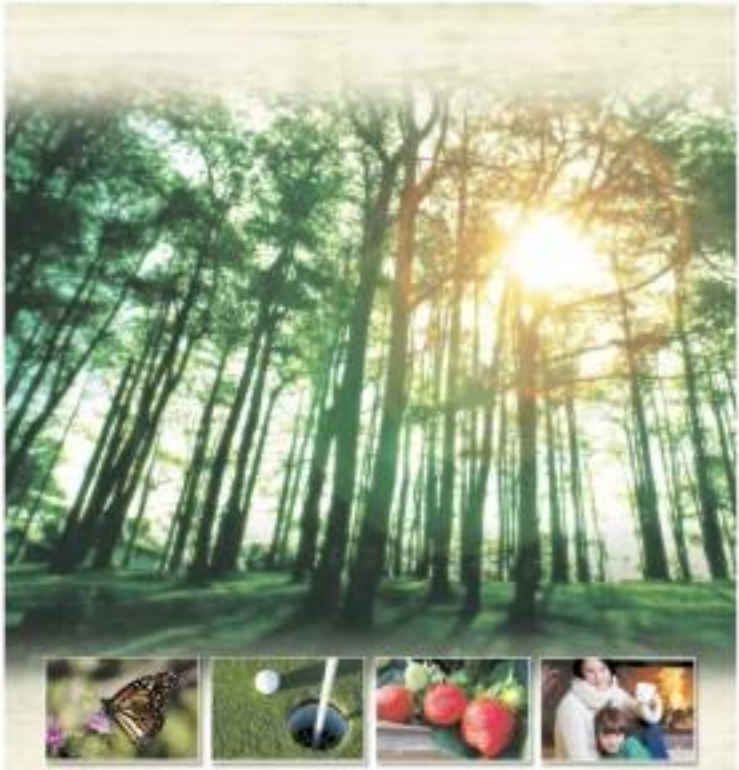
In the poem, Dante casts himself as a pilgrim on a journey through the consuming fires of Hell, the steep mountains of Purgatory, and the lush gardens of Heaven.

To represent Dante's great love, Beatrice, Alleyn's "Cantos Farewell" has Dante Alleyn's oil portraits create images of this mythical woman, the source of the poet's joy and pain.

Seeing's work touches on the fire of Hell...the fires that consume and renewal. Her works present Hell as a place of evil-coherent, the opposite of Heaven as evil is fun. Her Eskeletons serve as symbolic reminder that may eventually lead her wandering into the dark woods.

Tecson's work takes off from the middle of the tale. While the map of her life before her Tecson relies on memory as she lays the cornerstones that mark her 27 years. In her works, Heaven represents five happiest moments in her life, while Hell brings out the saddest times. In her boxes populated with rediscovered small plastic objects, she reconstructs a life of consequences.

"Cantos" opens March 20, 7 p.m., at White Box Gallery, Maclikan Shoe Expo, Cubao, Quezon City. Exhibit will run until April 1.



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FROM BOOK TO FILM

'Revolutionary Road' is a dark parable

FRANK (Leonardo DiCaprio) and April Wheeler (Kate Winslet) are suburban couple in 1950s America.

By Jordan Miel S. de Leon
Contributor

"REVOLUTIONARY ROAD," adapted from Richard Yates' novel of the same name, tells the story of a typical American couple who long to free themselves from the drudgery and woe suburban life in the 1950s to achieve their own American Dream.

Frank (Leonardo DiCaprio) and April Wheeler (Kate Winslet) have always considered themselves different and special compared to the rest of the people in their neighborhood on Revolutionary Road in Connecticut. They have vowed never to be dragged into the monotonous world of the people around them.

But despite their wit and good looks, the couple suddenly find themselves slowly becoming the people they sworn never to be: a plain, unhappy housewife who longs for satisfaction; a man with a boring job and an existence no full in the eyes of the neighborhood.

Determined to reverse their fortunes, April devises a bold plan for them to leave their commonsensing life and start anew in Paris. But Frank gets pressured and stalls their much-awaited departure, and they find their marriage crumbling.

Dark adaptation

The film hews closely to the book, especially in characterization, plot and dramas. But the film is darker than the book.

Most of the novel is told from Frank's point of view. The film, on the other hand, is able to show how the lives of April and Frank are playing out at the same time. As in the novel, the film relies heavily on drama, and both DiCaprio and Winslet effectively flesh out their roles as a wayward couple trying to find themselves amid the '50s middle-class conformity and mediocrity.

The novel depicts April as a housewife frustrated and emotionally swallowed after being unable to leave her suburban life. Winslet portrays the character with depth and dimension. Whether fighting back tears or being isolated from the world, she captures the essence of her character.

DiCaprio departs from his old roles and portrays a character that is not very likeable. He delivers an above-par performance of Frank, but his boyish looks make him appear too young for the role.

Notable is Michael Shannon, who steals the spotlight in several scenes as the lunatic mathematician John Givings.

The perpetual squabbling between Frank and April, the themes of subduing and the desire to break out of the prison of bourgeois family life mirror a reality that couples sometimes face. Marriage, for the years, can mean a lifetime of thankless work, while it can mean doing all sorts of acrobatics for love's sake. Both end up sacrificing their dreams.

From Recto to Machado and Neruda, MRT is now one great poetic ride

SPANISH AMBASSADOR LUIS Arias Serrano led the launch of "Versos en Metro /Verse to the Metro" campaign at the MRT line Ortigas recently.

The campaign consists of putting up posters of Spanish poems, with Filipino translations, in MRT trains.

The innovative campaign aims to encourage reading among Filipino commuters, while Filipinos with their rich Spanish heritage, and strengthen ties between the Philippines and Spain.

"The campaign also pays tribute to some of the best poets of the Philippines, Spain and Latin America.

"Not only would this keep the passengers from getting bored, they would actually be learning something while in transit," José Rodríguez, director of Instituto Cervantes de Manila said.

"With almost one million commuters riding the train every day, it provides a great opportunity for the reading community to reach as many people as possible," he said.

The selection of Spanish poems includes works of Filipino poets as José Rizal, Jesús Balmori, Claro M. Recto, José Ma. Eugenio Gonzaga, Patricio Montiano and Fernando María Guerrero; Spaniards Guillermo de la Barca, Lope de Vega, Federico García Lorca, Antonio Machado, Luis Cernuda, Luis Rosales, Miguel Hernández and Gil de Biedma, and Latin Americans Pablo Neruda and César Vallejo.

The campaign started in 2007 at the new LRT lines.

Instituto Cervantes is the cultural arm of the Spanish government that promotes and teaches the Spanish language and culture in the Philippines. It is the largest Spanish teaching organization worldwide, operating in more than 70 countries in four continents.

Instituto Cervantes de Manila is located at 855 Dr. Rizal St., Ermita, Manila, with tel. no. 526-1482 to 85.

MRT HERO Roberto Lastimosa, Sen. Ed Angara, National Historical Institute chair Ambeth Ocampo, Instituto Cervantes director Jose Rodriguez and Spanish Ambassador Luis Arias Serrano pose with "Berso ca Metro" dramatist.

LIFESTYLE Arts Books

22 artists for the 21st century

Paulino Que's collection of young artists' works shown for the first time

ALFREDO Esquillo's "The Threesome more Here," commissioned for Paulino Que, the legendary collector, shown beaming during the exhibit opening last Thursday at Rizal (left)

By Reuben N. Villegas
Contributor

ON VIEW AT WAREHOUSE Gallery of Finale Art File (Warehouse 17, La Fuerza Compound, 2241 Pasong Tamo, Makati City), for three weeks, is "Figuring the Times," which features 22 paintings from the Paulino Que Collection.

Finale managed to cajole Que, among the country's most respected private collectors, to show what he believed to be the best among paintings he commissioned from young artists or purchased through various galleries over the past decade. Curatorial advice was provided by Erika Sarreal and art historian Patrick Flores. It is the first in a series of educational, nonselling exhibits showcasing private collectors' choices.

The works range from Mark Justiniani's huge triptych (73" x 174") to Ronald Ventura's

22 ARTISTS D2

22 artists for the 21st . . .

From page D1

relatively small work (40" x 40").

Of the 22 artists, Jojo Legaspi is the oldest (born 1959) and Liz Velasco the youngest (born 1987).

The other painters are Elmer Borlongan, Charlie Co, Louie Cordero, Marlon Cruz, Kiko Escoto, Alfredo Esquillo Jr., Neno Gumayagay, Emmanuel Garibay, Eastern de Guia, Geraldine Javier, Mark Justiniani, Annie Sabigueng, Robert Langenegger, Maya Muñoz, Manuel Ocampo, Joel Antonio III, Yasmin Sison, Noel Tajelo, Wire Tuason and Ronald Ventura.

The Qua collection is complemented last 75 Hand Narrative of the Philippine Imagination," Arts of Asia: Vol. 39, No. 3, May-June 2009) but does not include significant works by hardcore Modernists of the late 1960s-late 1980s, who were heavily influenced by Russian, Mexican and Chinese propaganda art.

Qua has only a few works from that era's Conceptual artists, who believed that art was created by the viewer viewing an object, not by the intrinsic qualities of the work itself.

In the 1990s, Conceptual art was at its peak internationally, when the Young British Artists (YBAs), led by Damien Hirst, gained the patronage of the great collector and art dealer Charles Saatchi, and the Londoner exhibitionist Cosmopolitan's ideas such as anti-commodification, anti-art, anti-skill, anti-object, and ideas hibernation as modern continue to be evolving aspects of installation, performance, and electronic or digital art.

Eventually there was a backlash against Conceptual art. By the early 2000s, artists began returning to figurative painting and Classical Realism, evoking 15th-century Renaissance and Realist methods of artistic training and techniques.

Triumphant return

In an Institution Photos' title suggests, the 22 artworks in "Figuring the Times" signal the return of Complexities of figurative art and help to understand our era.

These young Filipino painters defy categorization as either Social Realist or Conceptual artists, adopting features of both as they see fit. The dialectics between Socialist Realism versus Conceptual Art, between Classicism versus Modernism versus Postmodernism, between high art versus popular art, provide the momentum and energy in New Philippine Painting.

Initially purchased by not-yet-in-the-money young collectors, while once like Pacifico just began catching up in the late 1990s. His first acquisition was "Stockade" by Geatbay. The subject is bored Realist, but his sophisticated, gritty texture is not found in the facile propagandism of previous activist painters.

By the 1990s, our globalizing consciousness necessitated new aesthetics. The Filipinistic Expressionists and Surrealists in Co's "The Journey Unending: In Heart" attempts to transcend the frustrations of the Philippine multitudes.

The mainstreaming of New Painting had progressed to such an extent that by the latter 2000s works by young Filipino artists were finching ever-soaring prices in auctions in Hong Kong, Singapore and Jakarta. Speculators rushed to buy everything on sight, with no real understanding.

Goth imagery

To understand New Painting is to come to terms with the goth, which underlies Western culture's second-world culture today.

The Goths were an Eastern Germanic tribe that dominated Southern culture from the 11th to 14th century. The "Gothic" style became a pejorative term during the Baroque period.

But from the late 18th century, people became fascinated with medieval ruins, romances and brooding heroes, thereby Gothicism and the supernatural.

Gothic Revival literature was associated with a mood of lonely melancholy, darkness, the occult. It inspired features of later horror literature and movies, such as ruined castles or churches, ghosts, melodramatic plots. The term Romantic gothic villain is the Satan-European vampire, which later morphed into Dracula.

Modernity's goth peaked in the early '80s as part of the punk, which grew out of existentialism and pop music into some subculture.

The philosophy underlying the goth is despair: life is dark, life is sad, all is not well, people will try to hurt you. To be goth is to be intrinsically Other, to dwell in the dark and death imagery in popular art.

As early as 1977, Raul Lagardo hosted the Sonia Memories' Sonia party spotlighting "trapeze angst drakkonum noir" ("totally black magic dress required"). Elements of fashionable Baroque coat dress, the Victorian cult of mourning, the Romantic punk and darkly gypsy styles were brought to costume runways.

The goth look combined "corpse paint" (pasty makeup with dark eyeliner) with dyed black hair, black fingernails, tattoos and piercings.

Goth imagery exploits the dark or side of sexuality found in BDSM culture (bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism). It involves sexual role-playing, fetishism, and domination and power exchange.

Nevertheless, goths generally do not support violence, hatred and aggression. The subculture emphasizes individualism and creativity, tolerance for diversity, cynicism, and a dislike of social conventions.

Whether consciously goth or not, the New Painters, artists can transcend to be hope, seek to transcend the everyday, through the sublime or the universally unique.

The beauty and contemporaneity of some artists' works greatly and enable those who see them. But some New Painters emphasize what for many of society is unconventional and shocking, lurid and aversion-from-reality.

Ambivalent

Gothically ambivalent is Jigger's "The Legend of Blind Springs." Are the dancers ecstasy gone fading in anger, or dancing? Is she romantically utilized gentleman in mortal fear of Nature, or is he about to unleash man's evil over hapless Nature?

The influence of the goth is apparent in the brooding, tortured-mood male persons in Medina's "This is Lunes." The bubbles seeming over the group gone in Javier's "Bubbles to Us Hard" brings to look to the innocent pleasures of childhood, until our eyes focus on that image with that of the dying nine bubble.

The Photorealistic orchestrations of the living rooms in Garcia's "Nothing Ever Happens Here" is belied by the ghostly figure in the following scenes.

For the New Painters, sexuality is confrontational. Vladimir's "Sleepy and Mega-sorta" shows a woman's hands not caressing her lover's nape but poised to strangle him.

In Tuason's "The Strangers," the blatant nakedness of the female contrasts with the guardedness of the males, both wear masks, symbolizing the lies brought to the table in sexual relationships.

Legaspi's "St. Thelma" unflinchingly and unforgivingly shows the sexual grotesqueries that is humanity.

In "Little Dinner" II, Nona Ilero ties the innocence of a childhood as represented in a fairy-tale house.

Just as unsettling is Medina's "Fish Blanche," an indictment of how society makes little girls understand and internalize notions to gender-role norms.

The complex mood of Cruz's "Memories of the Swirls' Piano Recital" is heightened by the diverse pictorial and motifs, the play on visual harmony and disharmonies.

Just as apparently unstructured is Javier' "Behind the Scenes," which refers to worst journeys and symbolic integration of characters and situations. Tantamount to the multiplicity of perspective in the geometrics of Brunelleschi and Leonardo-Vinci, Cruz and Javier visual-like approach evokes the paranoiacism of time and memory.

Allegorical impulse

The contemporaneity of intelligential impulse in Postmodern-art can be seen in Guerrero's "Holy Trinity" which appropriates Gothic and Baroque iconography.

Highly developed is the love-hero sense of humor, often revolving to the ugly: convoluted tortillons, gore, clinical, dissection. Gothic's "Untitled" portrait depicts a headhunter creature wearing a T-shirt with "Destroy All Monsters" emblazoned on his chest.

In Langenegger's "Rolling Personality," nine-to-three primitive paperwork by rolling the dice.

Postmodernist appropriation is the transformative use of borrowed elements to the creation of new work. It may involve the assemblage of disparate found objects and readymades, as in De Guia's Darkest work, "Infinite Repercussions II."

In "Conversation with Bacon," Kalaguingo's subject is not the British artist's painting as a dissection, but the conjunction between the artist and the persona engulfed by the emotional fingers of the viewer peering into the work.

In Ramon's "The Great Learning on the History of Consciousness," the viewer has to relate the image to the text, as well as the title, leading to an "Aha!" moment. Is the subject of aesthetic preference the artwork, or that moment of comprehension?

Social commentary is commonly lurking in the work of the New Painters. There is Borlongan's engagingly quirky, tongue-in-cheek take on Manila's art scene, "Emerging Stars."

Aquilla in "The Humanities Must Have" delivers an incisive indictment of the mis-education of Filipinos during the US colonial regime. The central panel in the superbly rendered photo-based triptych is that of a group of provincial schoolchildren wearing stars over their eyes and Goochie-Bliss masks. The left shows a schoolroom in the early 20th century; the right is the reverse of the same image, but with empty spaces where their heads should be.

Panoramic narrative

The last work to be included is this show—literally making it to the deadline—is Antonino's "Found Trip Overhead," a work as large he had to cut through the roof just to get it out of his house. Providing glimpses of key historical conjunctures in the rearview mirror, his panoramic narrative addresses the Moro insurgency, the multi-the-allegorical vehicles of Religion, the Military and Entertainment.

Clichés offer moral prescriptions, but dogma is trampled as they succumb to worldly pleasures. The revolution of 1896 lulled in spite of the martyrdom of heroes.

The phallus-laced military has only the empty sea on its sights, despite the corpses decorating the seafloor. One boat is that of a dictatorial clown; the Filipino soldier is caught but a castaway-king.

Entertainment and the mass media offer only the promise of fantasy. Obsessive to multi-color brains; the prospect of Heroes through false prophets (note Hero Acuna in "Heroes"); and the sexy allure of Mickey Mouse. A familiar face, representing political power, is invested with humor and sinister-ness in the commercialized consumerism that is a necessary accompaniment to the shadows.

Antonino's is an extremely important visual document of the times, a declaration that New Painting is relevant, doing well, grown sophisticated, slowly eyed and ever deepens.

These artists will be among those who will determine the direction of painting in this century the rest of this century. Without a doubt, at least one shall emerge a National hero in time.

CLOCKWISE from left: "Pink Blanche," by Ronald Ventura; "Gallery Representations A," by Kawayan de Guia; Emmanuel Garibay before his "Metabolic"

Carlo Magno's new works at SM Art Center

CARLO MAGNO'S "TRANSFORMATION 2," opens at SM Megamall's Art Center March 16, 6:30 p.m.

Having made a shift to abstraction from realism in 2005, Magno has been developing his art through experimentation, fusing realism, impressionism, minimalism and abstraction.

Magno incorporates lifelike figures and objects, juxtaposing them against textured minimal landscapes. In the process, the works traverse the very fine line between the real and the unreal.

"Transformation 2" is a relentless of expression in its truest form. The works combine bold strokes, dulcet tones, striking colors, soft earthy textures.

"EATING"

The "Forest Trails" series consists of bold strokes of cool dark tones, accented by purple blues and hints of gold. A studio is overshadowed by an abstract orb, evoking secret melodies played under the moonlight.

The dreamlike images are reminiscent of the artist's realistic period, but they are processed in an entirely different manner. The show is a fusion of styles, influences and themes.

"Transformation 2" runs until March 31. The show is organized by Galerie Francesca. Call 9916847. E-mail galeriefrancesca@yahoo.com.ph or visit www.galeriefrancesca.com.

Caña and his kaleidoscope world

HIS CHILDHOOD WAS spent some a bay in Calamba, Quezon. As the sun rose, he would run to the beach to wait for his father fishing for the day's catch.

While waiting for catches of sugpo, lapu-lapu and calalukab, he would spend his time observing the sand. The world depict his impressions of living boat, fish, clouds, fishing nets, seashells, and sometimes his father's face.

At other times, he would play marbles on the beach. Every time he looked at the marbles against the sand, the colors he captured by the multiplicity of colors as reflected through the light, resulting in various symmetries.

Little did he know that what he

"AMBLING ALFRONG" I

was seeing was called the kaleidoscope, from the Greek kalos (beautiful) and eidos (form), or "beautiful form."

This child is grown up now, still fascinated by the reflections of light against colors.

Pushalik C. Valencia, the artist now known as Caña, will open his third one-man art exhibit, "Kaleidoscope," on March 20, 6:30 p.m., in Village Art Gallery (L/1, Home Town, Alabang Town Center; call 8507765). The show runs until March 21.

Caña creates landscape artist Francisco "Fahrag" Verano and watercolorist Hiyas Valencia as his influences. He took up BS Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas.

He later worked as a graphic artist in the Middle East, where he won a prize in an art contest sponsored by the king. There he developed his "air brush" art technology, in which compressed oxygen is used to form line, lines and dimensions. The artist had a one-man exhibit in New York, featuring the technique.

Caña is a leading member of the Amorsolay Group of artists.

VISUAL ARTS

Dogtopia at Asia Art

James Dogtopia holds his 20th one-man exhibit, "Recuerdos de Zamboanga," March 20-April 6 in Asia Art Gallery. Call 2113, Intramuros Mall, SM Mall of Asia. The show consists of oil works depicting the landscape and urban scenes of Zamboanga City, where the artist grew up, as well as new works that reflect Dogtopia's mastery of Chinese traditional art imbued with modern ideas. Call 891 5382.

"AFTER the Rain"

Lalarga in Baguio

Roberto Lalarga, a Tondonan journal art and Fine Arts student of the University of the Philippines Baguio, will have her second solo exhibit of paintings, "Dalis in My Pocket Sukat," March 16-April 15 at Café by the Ruins, Dizeling Street, Baguio City.

"TENTSIT Inantur"

Group exhibit

The Philippine International Arts Festival group exhibit runs March 20-April 12 in Drew Workshop Gallery, G/F, La Fuerza Plaza II, 2241 Don Chino Roces Ave. Extension. Call 917 8376, e-mail info_workshop@yahoo.com or visit www.iwsg.ph.

Farol and Pueblo at Artas

"Project: Solitude + Trajectories," by Ronald Farol and Manny Pueblo, runs until March 21 in Artas Art Space, 3/F LKG Design Plaza, 16 Sarria Street, Bel-Air 1B, Makati City (across Alliance Française). The show is an installation focusing on an animal collection of partner Pueblo on glass as representative of personality stamp (Farol) and soft sculptures (Pueblo). Call 412 2888.

COLLECTED fragments of archeological worldwide, including Dr. Wilhelm Solheim's, by Neal III Farol

Vicente at Magnet

Manila Kramer's "Mixed Memories" is extended until March 28 at Mag-net Gallery, Agora Bldg., 105 Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call 9260101 or e-mail info@magnet-lumes.com or visit www.magnetgallery.com.

"BAO Mummy" 3

Oliveria at Magnet

Jayson Oliveria's "Life Experiences" runs until March 28 at Mag-net Gallery, Agora Bldg., 105 Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call 9260101 or e-mail info@magnet-lumes.com or visit www.magnetgallery.com.

"HOT as Inspire Aire" I

Gil Reyes on Antura List

Critic Gil Reyes, author of "Alfonso List," will give a talk, "Monumental New Works by Antonio List," March 28, 3 p.m., at the Ayala Museum lobby (Greenbelt, Makati). Call 7577117 ext. 21.

Cebu heritage through French eyes

To foreign eyes of our party that morning, it was an experience how modern Filipino society effortlessly fuses Christianity with folk practices so evident in the rituals of the faithful at the Basilica of Santo Niño

AT 6:30 THE MORNING, I LOOKED OUT OF the window to check the weather. Overcast and raining, the city view below five-storey Mango Plaza Area lived in Cebu was barely visible on such a grey day.

What a miserable day for a scheduled early-afternoon helicopter drop on the heritage town of Carcar in southern Cebu. I was looking forward to the trip so much that cancelling is due to bad weather was no option.

The weather cooperated somewhat that morning, the rain slowing down into a drizzle that allowed enough sun through to let us proceed with our planned morning walk to see Spanish colonial heritage in Cebu City, Casa Gorordo, Santo Niño Church and Fort San Pedro, the morning program of a refurbished one-day visit organized by French consul for the Visayas, Michel Lhoiry, and Louis Thévenin of Les Amis de la France to introduce Gérosme heritage to the French ambassador, Thierry Borja de Mozota, who recently arrived to begin his Philippine posting.

Host and wine lover Casa Gorordo, one of the last surviving authentic mid-19th century residences in the heritage zone of Cebu City. It was where the family of Mariquena Gorordo, the first Filipina archbishop of Cebu, had lived. A museum existed over a century ago until the Ramón Aboitiz Foundation reestablished it into a lifestyle museum in the mid-1990s.

Meticulously furnished and equipped with an extensive collection of what would have been ordinary household items of its time that now are valued as rare 19th-century artifacts, Casa Gorordo's lifestyle organizer exhibited within an authentic heritage setting showed with pride the outdated 19th-century, urbane Spanish colonial-era lifestyle of the wealthy Cebuano families.

To foreign eyes of our party that morning, it was an experience of how modern Filipino society effortlessly fused Christianity with folk practices so evident in the rituals of the faithful at the Basilica del Santo Niño, the oldest church in the country, the Basilica of Santo Niño, a national shrine whose pilgrims follow the traditional ritual of adding their individual candles of supplication to banks of burning candles, queuing to touch the glass-encased image of the Santo Niño, and attending any of the many devotional Masses offered each day.

Even more interesting than the religious ceremony at the Santo Niño Museum was the exhibit of elaborate capes, flamboyantly offerings to the image in gratitude for favors received.

Catching more attention than the capes was the cabinet filled with toys of all kinds given by children and their parents in touching thanksgivings for prayers answered. The Santo Niño is, after all, a little boy who likes playing with toys.

When we stepped out of the museum to a light shimmering drizzle, I thought my prayer for good weather was answered. Our takeoff was still to be at 2 in the afternoon. There was time for the weather to improve. But as we were leaving lunch, it poured, so we decided to do restaurant for the rain in suburbs.

Next week: Boracay in Bolinao
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Pride of Place

Augusto F. Villalon

Artist ISAGON on Marcos and Camilla Lucas of the French Embassy even a pet monkey at the Bday on Tikos Carcar

A PAGEN poster bed edition on at the heritage Alfafara-Noel house in Carcar

HAINT Carcarenos holding umbrellas in the drizzle come to watch the landing in the makeshift helipad in a muddy grass field.

UST Lenten exhibit shows works by renowned folk artists

By Gino Marzan
Contributor

FROM THE SUN-KISSED HILLSIDE of the ancestral of Pampanga to the tiled roof tiny rice-lore of Bohol, and in the serene cattle town of Pavia, artists join hands to mount an extraordinary Lenten exhibit, "Pasyon si Hesus."

Many of the pieces on exhibit are commissioned works and fabricated images of the characters and key figures prominently in the story of the Passion of Christ.

The exhibit, which promotes Philippine Catholic traditions and raises awareness of the need to preserve cultural heritage, is curated by ecclesiastical exhibit designer Bel Tesio Nicolas.

If the canvas is to the painter, the hallowing the damp allang as chalice or flagdaran, or even the wood-shaving kamalig is to Nicolas. Armed with a solid background in Catholic dogmas, having been a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas and a catechist during his college days, Nicolas is an amalgam of talent and faith. He transforms lobbies and empty rooms into well-laid-out exhibits with fresh concepts that may soon either inculcate or intimidate.

The work is poetic or amore. Nicolas considers every exhibit he curates as an offering to his Gino Bernini, the Nicolas Sotto del Rosario, La Sirena de Manila.

In the very current sphere that image is consumed, Nicolas was the leading proponent of exemplary exhibits mounted from the '50s up to the centenary of the Virgin's Canonical Coronation in 2007. The design and layout of Pilares sin Sin, Domingo in his token of affection and gratitude for the many blessings bestowed on him by the Blessed Virgin.

Museum style

The execution is museum style. The images are unadornedly solemn. The focus is on the image and not on the display.

This is the Nicolas way, to draw one's attention to the beauty of the image—the milieu of its existence and the style of its craftsmanship. To reflect on the image's story and the message that could lead to a connection with one's daily life, a process that is both aesthetic and spiritual.

Appointed as honorary advisor to the UST Museum by Rector Rolando de la Rosa, O.P. in 1993, an art educator and a production designer for movies and television, Bel, as friends call him, takes the after-noon-off in a bus ride to Pavia, where the exhibit's frontispiece is being made.

Relief by Ac-Ac

The frontispiece is a relief showing old women shaving the Datung Mahal inside a cajon box. To Nicolas, the only artist who could render this concept is the famous Philippine folk genre artist Lazaro Ac-Ac. His works convey strong Filipino sensibilities and in the same time reach a high level of craftsmanship. Whether in the quaint town of Boac or in the Heritage Halls of New York, Ac-Ac's visualization of the Filipino's innate charm never failed to capture one's admiration.

Exhibit segments

Succeeding segments of the exhibition give form and substance to the unfolding drama typical of a humorous Mahal na mine. The first segment is on the Agony in the Garden, Jesus, Gethsemane de Rajohan, Matatawo, up to the Crucifixion. Several Segment is the Mater Dolorosa...images of the Blessed Virgin in a wide range of pain and anguish.

The third segment is Hallowing ng Sto. Entierro. Images in attendant of the Santo Entierro's entourage take positions as in a Good Friday procession in Carcar, Daro, or any other town; and, lastly, Jesus Resucitado.

Valencia of Pampanga

The main organizers of the exhibit are not that easy to locate by any measure. So Nicolas wrapped to Pampanga to seek help from two artists.

In San Fernando, Ajie Valencia, a doctor by profession, created beautifully carved images in wood. His Pietà and Hesusgang sa dur Pilar are his most invaluable contributions to the exhibit. The clean-cut schooling who started carving out of thrift was now the artist who painted and carved images with a distinct Filipino look. Though unschooled in art, Valencia's work is a dramatic of saintly characters with Filipino features in Philippine setting, yet attired in classical fashion and complete with the symbolisms of the Catholic faith.

ARI NICOLAS checks on the finishing touches done by artist Jojo Valencia on "Sumayang si Ina Pilar."

"Ang Pabasa" (left) in the finishing wood, the frontispiece of the exhibit, by Luis Borja.

"DESCENT from the Cross," watercolor study for the stained-glass window of Sacramento del Sto. Cristo in San Juan, by the late Cenen Rivera, from the collection of Ari Nicolas

HUMALTUNG Sto. Entierro in brown, from the collection of Jerome de Jesus

Art restorer Joven

The principal contributor of images to the exhibit is art restorer Tino Joven, Dagdihang ng Sto. Entierro almost entirely came from his collection. Looked for many years in a room in their ancestral house in Bamban, Pampanga, Santa Maria Dioski, Maria, Maria Magdalena and Veronica were spruced up and brought to Manila to take their positions in a processional formation in this exhibit hall.

Joven started collecting antiques in the '70s and worked as a finishing artist in an export company in Pampanga. He had gained entry into the restrictive world of high-end trade of antiques via the Lo-S Group and, with sheer patience and mastery of skill, earned his way in the restoration of centuries-old images of prestigious Filipino families.

This passion and love for our cultural heritage combined with the strength of his talent brought him to the altars of the ostensibly crowned images of the Nuestra Señora de la Correa of San Agustin, the Dimasupuestos of Sta. Rita and Manilenas, and the Los Reinedos of Pampanga, for the restoration works on these venerated images.

Opening at UST parish church

"Pasyon si Hesus" opens for the public and the visits of Cuaresma, March 22, 10:30 a.m., when project chair Fr. Isaias Mandilo, O.P. assisted by Rev. Fr. Lorin Gesterner, O.P. and Fray Rondinel Abrigal, O.P., will lead the Misa ng Pag-Asa celebration in the Rotunda of the Santuario Basilio Parish inside UST.

Department of Tourism director Rolando de los Reyes and actress Sunny Jerome Roa will cut the ribbon.

Heirloom images of noted collectors such as Nelly Diaz, Francisco Ortiz, Dr. Norberto Manlapaz, Fr. Roland Castro, O.P., Fr. Aja Arevalo, Fr. Isidro Abaño, O.P., Joy Belmonte, Noel Magallona and Zee Bautista, among others, have been loaned to complete the exhibit.

"Pasyon si Hesus, A Lenten Exhibit" will run until April 12. Karen Bunday Project coordinator and graphic artist is Janice Sherith V. Aurig.

Sanso's many moods, diverse colors on exhibit

GALERIE STEPHANIE PAYS TRIBUTE TO Juvenal Sanso with the exhibit "The Impermanence of Being Juvenal" opening March 21, 7 p.m.

Many of Sanso's followers and the public have been intrigued by the name Juvenal.

National Artist Nick Joaquin thought Juvenal in name "spunk," as in is close to the word *Juventud* in Spanish. Others have thought of it to be synonymous to spring. Whatever it is, the name has been important enough to have several French and Italian cities named after it, such as a port, a bridge, several subdivisions and inns, even a garage.

Sanso himself clarifies that Juvenal came from the favorite satire writer of his father, who was born circa 65 AD in what is now Monte Cassino in the south of Rome. He was known to have written scathing satirical commentaries about the corruption and the rotten social fabric of imperial Rome.

The name Juvenal can also be said to have come from "Jupiter" from the expression "By Jove!"), god of gods in the Roman religious hierarchy. It is also related to the word "Thursday," or "Gumuld" in Latin and "Jueves" in Spanish, which again comes from the Italian equivalent of "Jupiter."

"The Importance of Being Juvenal" puts together some 30 interesting collectible works from Sanso—culled from the past 2½ decades of his career in many of these works, one will note the introspective and deep inspection of the artist in his/her models, one will note also the joy of nature.

"MELODY in Green"

"TIGHNDS of Elephants"

"ODE TO Life"

Galerie Stephanie is at the Hen Plaza Building, 183 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City. Call 709 1488 or visit www.galeriestephanie.multiply.com or www.galeriejuaquin.com.

Book of ecofables for children launched

THE CENTRE FOR ART, NEW VENTURES and Sustainable Development (Carven) launched the book "Earth Tales: 3 Ecofables for Children," a collection of short environmental stories, on March 8 at 1/st Gallery, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

The launch also opened the exhibit featuring art illustrations used in the children's book.

The book is illustrated by Pier Bulgara (for "The Hummingbird"), Lira Flores ("The Star Thrower"), and Lanchee-based artist Jose Mallee ("The King and the Royal Trees").

The book launching coincided with the International Women's Day celebrations. Part of the proceeds of the book sale will help fund the projects of The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (Towns) Foundation.

Flores has created large and playful acrylic-on-archival-paper pieces.

Olivares-Mallee's acrylic on canvas bracket unique lines tempered with washes of colors that convey energy as well as gentleness.

Bulgara's art pieces mark his return to oil and his initial foray into new media. The "Hummingbird" collection features his colorful style through mixed media, such as oil and collage on linen, and limited-edition digital artworks.

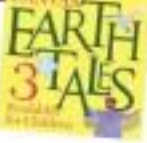
"Earth Tales: 3 Ecofables for Children" is not published by the UST Publishing House.

Signed copies of the book and limited-edition prints of the illustrations are available at 1/st Gallery. Call 903.2122 or visit www.ncvea.ph.

"THE KING and the Royal Trees"

ARTIST Pier Bulgara during the book signing

THE BOOK cover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Charice aims for the Grammys

CHARICE Pempengco wants to be named Best New Artist in the Asian iconic awards.

By Reynel San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rudy Espiritu

JUST HOW FAR IS SHE HEADED?

Filipina singer Charice Pempengco doesn't claim to know the answer to that question.

"It's all up to God," she said.

But is she thinking of, maybe, going Hollywood?

After all, she sang not just in one, but two post-Oscar parties—at Fox Fox Hills owner Mr. Chow and Oprah Winfrey's bash held at the Kodak Theater.

Does she see herself re-enacting with "High School Musical" heartthrob Zac Efron?

"No, I'd rather be in an adventure-comedy with Alvin and the Chipmunks," she quipped.

The just-sixteen Charice, 16, who can

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Rhian clueless on JC's plans

By Marinel R. Cruz

NO PROBLEM.

Actress Rhian Ramos says news of fellow GMA 7 artists and rumored boyfriend JC de Vera's possible transfer to rival network ABS-CBN will not affect her relationship with the actor.

Some of JC's leaving for home stable because the topic of subtend ensue in connection with the ongoing tiff between GMA 7 executive Wilma Galvante and JC's manager Annabelle Rama. Lenart reports say JC is still weighing down his options on whether or not to accept GMA's offer to renew his contract.

Rhian and JC got close while working on the local adaptation of the rap-making Argentinean soap opera "La Leli." While subscribing to post-star interviews to having been restricted to such offline. Rest assumes that they're merely close friends.

"I have no idea what's going to happen to JC and GMA 7. I don't ask questions. It really depends on The

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8 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
9 I HATE YOU, LOVE YOU
10 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

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1 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 THE UNBORN
3 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
4 WATCHMEN
5 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
6 TAKEN
7 STREETFIGHTER

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1 THE INTERNATIONAL
2 WATCHMEN
3 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
4 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
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ROUNDUP

'Sister Stella L.'

The UP Film Institute is holding a special anniversary screening of Mike de Leon's "Sister Stella L." on March 20 at 9 p.m. at the Cine Adarna.

Dubbed "Sister Stella L. @ 25: Tales and PARAbula," the activity is organized by the film 200 class in cooperation with the Video Source Info Movement, Inc. (VSMI).

It stars Vilma Santos as a nun pursued by her ex-boyfriend but whose heart goes out to the indigent.

Tickets are sold at PHL CAB (FIST BUILDING).

Cinemabuhay tilt

The FLIP Interdisciplinary (FSI) and Cinemabuhay has set the deadline for submission of script entries in the 2009 Cinemabuhay competition on April 15.

The FSF invites an annual award of P1 million for a script by a new filmmaker.

Director Quemuelito specifies include "Pinakbalikbol" in 2007 and "Tal de Sur" in 2008.

Invitational screening

The action film "1 Pounder" from 20th Century Fox will have its invitational screening on March 20 at the Greenbelt Cinemas.

The film stars John Cena as Danny Baker, the beleaguered cop who must complete 12 rounds of dangerous entrapment by an international criminal within the city of New Orleans.

It opens March 25 in local theaters.

RETURN OF 'FANDAY'

Film producer Andrea Boutista (right) has announced that the remake of "Panday" is already in full swing during the recent birthday party of her husband, Real Gov. Jun Nuevas (left). The film is co-billed by Boutista's brother, Sen. Bong Revilla and co-produced by Boutista's Imus Productions Inc. and GMA Films.

Rhian clueless . . .

From page E1

scientific," Rhian tells Inquirer Entertainment as her media launch at FLIT MyBiz) latest endorser. "If he wonders, I would miss seeing him around the GMA 7 compound and on SOP, that's all. There are other ways for us to keep in touch even though we're far apart, like sending each other text messages or chatting through the Net," says Rhian.

'Zorro'

Rhian, 16, is part of the cast of the local version of Rony Pilkian Television's "Zorro," which premieres on March 23. Rhian will be paired once again with Richard Gutierrez, her on-screen partner in Jeffrey Kapunan's "Quiapo Basbell," "Lupin," "Codename: Asero" and the movie "The Promise."

"A lot of things changed since we last worked together. Closer to different now. I see that he enjoys what he's doing," Rhian says of her co-star.

To prepare for "Zorro," Rhian took horseback riding lessons and a crash course in Spanish. Working on the show also explains her to stay for long periods on the set in Bagac, Bataan. "I'll work hard on some from breakdowns, getting endless to our way to keep in touch," she explains.

E-mail: news@inquirer.com.ph

SHANG CINEPLEX

1) WATCHMEN R-15 11:30, 2:30, 5:10, 8:30
2) RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN DP 12:10, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:50
3) TAKEN PG-13 2:15, 4:35, 6:55, 9:15
4) RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN DP 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
THE UNBORN R-15 12:40, 2:50, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40

Shangri-la Plaza

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PROMENADE

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HARRY POTTER

"I have adored the book as a child and 'The Secret of Moonacre' fed my creative spirit and acted as my inspiration for Harry's adventures."
~J.K. Rowling, creator of Harry Potter

DAKOTA BLUE RICHARDS as 'The Golden Compass'

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OPENS MARCH 18

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Southern Cuisine Cooking Workshops
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AYALA CENTER CEBU
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March 16 - 22, Rotunda Areas
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March 9-31, Activity Center
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glorietta
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Ayala Center Cebu
Trinoma

Marvin has signature dish for girls he dates

I HAD A SPLENDID TIME WITH Marvin Agustin at his big Macanao's swole (ZP Greenbelt 3).

"When my partners and I were overpowhelming the place, we ate at about 20 Italian-American teams in New York," Marvin said. "We bring the taste, flavor and look of an Italian team in con-stapolitan Sims Park. We serve great pastas, entrées, delicious salads, super thin-crust pizzas and the best steak ever."

I asked the entertainer to him about his splendidness and comfort food. "My splendidness are wine and burger," he revealed. "My comfort food are shapes and beef wonton noodle soup."

Would he fall for a girl who doesn't know how to cook? "I can't imagine being intimate with someone who doesn't share my passion for food."

Does he have a signature dish for every girl he dates? "My pasta is to Marv was a hit with an ex. I try to come up with different dishes for each girl, thinking no naman ako (laughs)."

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

Love and laughter are a staple in Marvin's name.

Memories with Bisse

Bobbie Padilla teams up with **Sunshine Dizon, Xilam Ramos** and **Anthea Ibaldi** in a fun **against death in CIMA Films' next** antagonist **horror-suspense** thriller "Smoke," which opens March 18. It takes after the age-old legend that departed mortals come to pick up their loved ones who are in the brink of death.

I remember the many episodes in my life when I got involved with Bisse and kept him company in his Nueva Ecija hideout. He feared **for his life after his running mate** in the elections back then got assassinated. I kept recommend that we switched vehicles. He made sure me his Nissan Patrol and he used mine.

But he days of living and losing dangerously are over. After his horrifying reminiscences, Bisse has been given a second lease on **ex-pervaders**, and he will definitely not blow it.

In his "goodbye letter" to me, he wrote: "I will work hard to be on top again. I am a fast star. Thanks for being there more than I've done and out. I hope we can still later for together and be friends when I get back on track. But please don't cry. I'm not dying."

Seeing Bisse back in the groove, I can't help but smile. Success is sweeter the second time around. Smiles, Bisse! You did it and world yourself!

One night only

Catch the three Grammy-award winning R&B singer, songwriter and pianist **John Legend in concert** on March 26 at the Big Dome.

Hailing Manila for the first time for his "Evolver World Tour" a **promoters** as **progressive expressive** which includes hits like "Ordinary People" and "Save Room."

John was among an exclusive group of artists who performed at Barack Obama's inauguration and he sang "Ave Ho" (Best Original Song) at the 81st Academy awards.

Legend's **remote** sincerity is truly legendary.

E-mail: sweetnightsdolly@yahoo.com

ROBIN Padilla

POWER PLANT CINEMA

THE UNBORN – RED
RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN – GP
WATCHMEN – RED
TAKEN – PG13
THE INTERNATIONAL – PG13
RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN – GP

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

THE UNBORN
RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
WATCHMEN
TAKEN
CINEMA 5
CINEMA 6
ULTRA CINEMA 7
RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

Charice aims for the Grammys

CHARICE Pempengco is accompanied by violinist Jay Cayuca as she sings in a mini concert at Rebo Shangri-la Plaza mall.

entrees the singing styles of local divas like Jessa Zaragoza and Sarah Geronimo, saw likewise mimic the voices of Alvin, Simon and Theodore from the animated music group Chipmunks.

But if there's anything at all that Charice wishes to achieve through music, it is to be included in the most prestigious industry event in America.

"What's on my mind is the Grammys," she told.

She hopes to attend next year's Grammy Awards as a nominee... especially since her debut album, currently being recorded and produced by David Foster, is on for release this summer.

"That's my dream," she admitted. "That one of my songs would be nominated. That I would win as Best New Artist."

She sang her first single off the album, "Fingerprints," along with Beyoncé Knowles' "Listen," in the two pre-Oscar parties.

> "There or abroad, I want to make Filipinos proud"

"I'm so thrilled because I met a young girl on YouTube singing 'Fingerprints,'" Charice related. "To think I had just recorded it, but she has already memorized all the words!"

"Fingerprints" was written by Robbie Nevil, the same guy behind The Pussycat Dolls' "When I Grow Up" and Jordin Sparks' "One Step at a Time," as well as three songs on Vanessa Hudgens' "High School Musical" soundtrack. He also recorded the hit song "I Live La Vie" in 1987.

"We hope to have at least 10 songs in the new album," Charice said. "We're looking for ballads. R&B and upbeat numbers. I want most of the tracks to be original, with maybe just two covers."

Having her own signature song is important to her. "In that when people watch my concerts, they would get to hear my own music, not just cover versions of Whitney Houston and Celine Dion hits."

She also feels strongly about including a Filipino song in her UK debut.

She said she got more interviews performing for fellow Filipinos in local shows compared to foreigners in gigs abroad.

Case in point: She confessed to having butterflies in her tummy prior to her latest live concert, a Women's Month celebration at the Shangri-La Plaza mall. "Filipinos are very picky," she said. "If you impress them, they will show their appreciation. If not, they will also show it!"

But seeing their faces light up is enough to inspire Charice.

"With every performance, here or abroad, I aim to make Filipinos proud," she said.

E-mail: boyet.icon@gmail.com

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Calling all high school students
Win a cool computer package plus P10,000 in savings! Interview a WWII veteran or survivor, write a story and submit with the coupon below to the WWII True Stories Contest. Deadline is March 18.

Are college admission tests fair?

WE POSED THIS QUESTION to a handful of fairly recent graduates of top universities in Metro Manila. We also asked if they thought a standardized college admission test (CAT) similar to the tests given in other countries would be a better criterion for placement. Here's what they said. If you agree, disagree or simply want to vent, e-mail or text us.

Compiled by Jaime Victoria
Contributor

Joly Soontres, Ateneo de Manila University; took five college entrance exams

I don't think they are fair. I don't believe in specialized exams per university or college because they just give schools an excuse to accept or not to accept students. Also, they are costly and time consuming.

A standardized CAT is a better alternative to individual entrance exams because at least there is just one test to take and, from there, an applicant would know which school to enter according to his/her score. However, the standardized CAT should be modified every year to avoid leakage.

Angelo Velasco, De La Salle University; took four college entrance exams

If we're talking about measuring positive capabilities, I don't think it can be helped that the tests differ since each university has its own standards. Take the Ateneo exams—it requires incorporated in answering questions. The UPCAT had a more comprehensive Filipino part, while DLSU's had an essay portion in Filipino. UST gave the easiest test, far too easy in fact that it didn't seem like a fair measure of what and how one learned in high school.

I think a standardized CAT will be better for this country as all graduating students can focus on a standard set of requirements plus their knowledge in all subjects will be fairly measured, unless the exams we have now that vary in terms of what you need to know (focus on math for this school, focus on another subject for another school, and such).

Ryan Dilix, University of the Philippines; took three college entrance exams

In the context of getting into a particular university, I think having to pass an entrance exam is fair. Each university has its own standards that I assume are reflected in the kind of CAT that is given. While high school grade point averages, curriculum vitae, interviews and other similar factors can provide a more holistic assessment of a student's suitability to a particular university, the CAT is an objective, quantifiable and practical way to see if there's a match. Unless, of course, it's a talent-based program of study like in UP where they give online tests to aspiring fine arts and music majors. In that case, an entrance exam shouldn't get in the way.

Lisa Paredes, Ateneo de Manila University; took four college entrance exams

I found the tests to be fair, yes, because the questions asked reflected the workload that the students were going to be receiving if they got in. Two of four tests that I took, however, had passage reading overloads and made it easy for students to cheat. I found it really weird, but they were also the easiest schools to get into.

Amelita Acosta, University of Santo Tomas; took nine college entrance exams

I think entrance exams do not necessarily measure the total aptitude of students. They only measure how ready you are to enter college at the time you take the test. They don't tell you if the course you've picked will be right for you. I've also heard there's a lot of problems in administering entrance exams, so I think a standardized CAT would be better.

Laura Stevens Paraguas, University of the Philippines; took one college entrance exam

I believe they are fair. College and universities have their own standards for what they look for in a student and entrance exams enable them to uphold such standards, to some extent.

Having a standardized CAT, devoid of "biases" of colleges, is also a good idea. This is to assess a student's eligibility for college itself, if he or she is intellectually (and perhaps, even psychologically) fit to handle the rigors of higher education.

Leslie Mika Dickson, University of the East (RM Memorial Medical Center); took three college entrance exams

Some were fair because they touched on basic concepts that we were supposed to know as high school seniors. However, there were questions that were not relevant in determining a person's capability to do well in college.

There should be a standardized CAT like in the US because time and money since students will take only one test and use this score for admission to specific schools. Schools can inform students of the grade range they expect from their applicants. Students will not only save on entrance exam fees, they'll also be spared the ensuing feeling rejected by several schools.

Mikael de Lara Co, Ateneo de Manila University; took three college entrance exams

As far as the individual colleges are concerned, I don't see how anyone could consider the exams unfair. Some of these are centuries-old institutions, with names and standards to protect, and I think they have the right to screen students according to their standards.

But if you're asking if all students have a fair chance to get in, the answer is no. I don't think the problem lies with the universities. Public schools don't get enough funding from the government, they're impoverished both in facilities and good teachers. Then students can't really compete with someone from a private school.

A standardized CAT, I think, is a good and workable idea. It doesn't address the real problem here: the inequities in our country's educational system. Besides doing the CAT will not help because the chasm between the private and public school infrastructure is too wide.

Donald Marapagal, University of Santo Tomas; took four college entrance exams

The exams per se are fair enough, it doesn't really matter whether the test is hard or the questions is disputably short. It is just the particular standard of the school. If everyone fails then they'll move to...it's not like they can have a year with none or really few students. The schools only make the CAT hard for whatever reputation and to satisfy themselves on some unlikely level.

What a CAT test is preventing students from particular schools, say Ateneo de Manila University giving priority to students from Ateneo High School, or prioritizing Metro Manila schools over provincial schools.

Walther Bustillocruz, Ateneo de Manila University; took three college entrance exams

The issue of "fairness" arises only when students who don't really pass the test get into the university for other reasons.

Hurry! Deadline of submission of entries is extended to March 18, 2009

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UM Peso hailed best by Dole

FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, the University of Mindanao–Public Employment Service Office (Peso) was hailed the Outstanding Peso in the NGO-Academe Category by the Department of Labor and Employment Region XI, Reynaldo C. Castro, the Peso manager, received the award during the Bests Year End Performance Assessment and Award's Night at the Marco Polo last Dec. 15, 16.

UM is also recipient of the Best Peso Award for the 4Ps Implementation. The Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) is mandated under Republic Act No. 7323 otherwise known as "An Act To Help Poor But Deserving Students Pursue Their Education by Encouraging Their Employment. During Summer and/or Christmas Vacations, Through Incentives Granted to Employers, Allowing Them to Hire Only Sixty Per Cemum of Their Industry or Pirgos and The Forty Per Centum Through Education Vouchers To Be Held By the Government.

The UM Peso is the first recipient of the National Best Peso award in 2007 and the first academe to receive such recognition in the region. In the past, it won also recognized Best Peso in the implementation of Local Guidance and Job Fair Programs.

Other awardees include: Island Garden City of Samal as Best Peso for the City Category, Davao del Norte as Best Peso for the Provincial Category; Nabunturan for the Best Peso in the 1st–4th class municipality category and Digos for the 5th to 6th class municipality category. Other special awards were given to Bacolod City for Job Fair and Self Employment Program; UM Tagum for Career Guidance Program; municipalities of Bislig and Mawapanao for the Gross Micro Program; and the KEPS for the Program for Persons with Disabilities. The awardees will represent Davao Region in the annual awards night at the Department of Labor and Employment on October 2009 in Pampanga.

MAX SOLIVEN'S STATUE UNVEILED

Ambassador Primitivo S. Salivera of O.B. Montemar, widow of the late Max Soliven poses with Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, and siblings Kristina and Ethel after the unveiling of a monument in honor of Soliven in Mayor Lim's Bayanihan recently. Max Soliven's book, Ang Kwentuhan Gulf - A Collection of Television Poems was also launched on the same day. The book is now available in select Mercurial Bookstore branches and at the Manila Bookstore.

UB COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING BAGS AWARDS

The University of Batangas College of Engineering, headed by Asst. Prof. Cesario Ilao, once again bagged numerous awards from the recently-conducted battle of Collegiate Electrical Engineers of the Philippines Inc. (IEEC) Competition. It was held recently at the Batuan Institute of Technology, Manila. Each competitor was joined by several engineering students nationwide. Shown are, from left, engineer Jun-Boy B. Gallo, Asst. Prof. Ruben Richard M. Calma, Mark Joseph Dacumagat, engineer Henry J. Cubeling (dean), Dr. Hernando B. Perez III, president, Dr. Victor M. Argueles, VP academic affairs, Gilbert Macinganing, Jessica S. Castillo, Mark Joseph C. Ramos, and engineer Nicholi Enad.

Noli Santos invited to 2009 World Forum

EMMANUEL "NOLI" SANTOS was invited to the prestigious World Forum to make a presentation or deliver a speech on current issues to be held in Washington DC from June 29 – July 4. The World Forum Federation has conferred on Santos the rank of "Ambassador" to represent the Philippines at the international conference at the historic Willard Hotel.

Santos and Lou Imbert said that in "the last days during which the world's most impassioned, brilliant and visionary achievers from multiple backgrounds and over 60 countries interact with each other to create a "global senate."

Noli Santos is founder-president and chair-CEO of the International Academy of Management and Economics. SAME Lou also is Ayala Avenue Extension (stars left, off) Noli Santos International Tower, 1081 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.

Santos has written books in the field of constitutional law, business law, management, organization, corporate governance, strategic planning, international marketing, and international commercial arbitration. He is chairman of the editorial board of IAME Journal of Management, Law and Economics and serves as member of the editorial board of the American Chamber (Am-Cham) Journal.

Santos is listed in a dozen international Who's Who published in US and Cambridge, England. He is recipient of such international awards in education, finance and business.

LETRAN, LETRAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HONOR JUSTICE PERALTA

Colegio de San Juan de Letran and the Letran Alumni Association hold a thanksgiving mass and hooded investiture ceremony last March 14 in honor of Justice Oswaldo M. Peralta, newly-appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court Justice Peralta graduated BSC Letran in 1964. Justice Peralta received the token of appreciation from Letran Alumni president Eugene Ng Cushing (seen, from left, Fr. Pompeyo Pena, OP, Fr. Tarcisius Lang, OP and Atty. Cushing).

TIP LINKS WITH CUERVO APPRAISERS

The Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP) Manila and Cuervo City recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cuervo Appraisers Inc., the leading appraising company in the Philippines. The Memorandum of Understanding initially provides for the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship and Business Education curriculum at TIP. The structuring of short Appraisal courses by TIP's Center of Continuing Education (TIPCCE), and eventually the offering of Appraisal Valuation Education as a full degree program at the TIP. Signatories to the MOU were the president of TIP, Dr. Cynthia C. Lanuz, and the president of Cuervo Appraisers, Charito Cole-Alfonso. Photo shows, from left, Dr. Cynthia C. Lanuz, vice-president for academic affairs of TIP; Charito Cole-Alfonso, president of Cuervo Appraisers Inc.; Dr. Elizabeth D. Lanuz, president of TIP; and Maria Theresa Cuervo, members board of directors of Cuervo Appraisers Inc.

DLSL opens its doors to international students

IN RESPONSE TO DR. LA SALLE LEWIS' DLSL's internationalization agenda, it now maintains strong relationship with 14 universities from 9 countries. Since 2008, DLSL president, Br. Manuel Jaguelito Pile, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partner universities from USA, South Korea, Taiwan, France, Indonesia, China, Chile, Japan, and Thailand through the newly established Linkages and International Relations Department. The MOU seeks to promote and encourage a fruitful academic cooperation between DLSL and its partner universities through faculty exchange, students exchange, cultural exchanges, joint research and publications, joint workshops and other academic-related activities. One of the significant partnerships established by DLSL was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Universidad de Santo Tomas (UST) in Chile which was witnessed by former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos and the Philippines' Ambassador to Chile, Commodo Peter Reyes.

Lyceum dean hailed Outstanding CPA in Education

DR. GALILEO S. DEL MUNDO, DEAN of the College of Business Administration and the Graduate School of the Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas was recognized by the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) as an Outstanding Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the field of education.

With the national award conferred in the 62nd Chapel Annual Chairman's Convention, Del Mundo was honored for his outstanding and unwavering pursuit of quality accounting education, sharing his expertise on auditor's economic growth as educator, author, resource speaker, facilitator and accreditor in various field of endeavors such as management consulting and audit and other related fields.

Peers acknowledged Del Mundo for being an epitome of pride, integrity and dignity in the accountancy profession and to the institution as a whole.

UA&P helps empower local governments to realize their dreams

UA&P HAS HELPED EQUIP 22 mayors from Cabanatuan-Nueva Ecija complement their dream projects. The university, through the Center for Social Responsibility (CSR), in partnership with the British Embassy in Manila, recently conducted a conference-workshop for them under the Municipal Financing Options for Local Government Units Project, otherwise known as Project AB.

Project AB is a three-year technical assistance program that aims to encourage sustained economic reform and promote higher standards of governance in partnership among local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to enable LGUs that are members of the League of Municipalities to become more financially independent from the Internal Revenue Allotment and national government by narrowing by supplying various alternative modes of generating resources.

Speaker Christopher Lloyd Richards Revira said of the conference-workshop, "Project AB gives each participant the hope to realize their fourth-needed projects by providing them with the proper tools to analyze and evaluate the soundness of a project."

Aside from the conference-workshop, Project AB involves implementing at least 3 successful alternative financing options projects by LGUs, producing a guidebook on how to effectively access and utilize alternative financing options; and formulating a framework of partnership among local stakeholders, including civil society groups, the private sector and concerned national government agencies/or sources of funding for local development.

Colin Cowdery, Deputy Head of Mission of the British Embassy Manila, affirmed that "the project will help make the local government executive officers better equipped to make private-public partnership and source other financing options for their projects."

First Asia run for wellness held

MORE THAN 1,000 RUNNERS JOINED the Run for Wellness 2009, a program spearheaded by First Asia School of Management in partnership with Lima Pamilyan. The fun run was held last Feb. 22, at the Lima Technology Center, Malvar, Batangas. This first-ever run was organized to help tie the community ones to urge the members of the community to lead an active and healthy life. Participants joined three competitive categories: 3K, 5K and 10K races. There were also two fun run categories: 3K and 5K. The Office of Mayor Dr. Marilu Bolpon of the Municipality of Malvar, Vice Governor Mary Leviste and Lima Land Inc. supported the program as part of their community and CSR activities. Democrito Pinpin Jr. topped the 10K Men category while Catalina Loquellog topped the 10K Women category. The winners took home cash prizes and gift certificates from Lima Pamilyan.

FOOTNOTES

THE HP-NSTP agreement was signed by HP's Rachelle Bernardo, Cielo Romero, Christi Tan, Emmanuel "Noel" Mendoza and Mapua's Dr. Reynaldo B. Vea.

Partnership renewed

HEWLETT-PACKARD (PHILIPPINES) Corp. (HPPC) and the Philippine office of Ateneo de Manila University (AIM)'s renewed recently their partnership with the Mapua Institute of Technology (Mapua) branch.

Under the partnership, an HP-UX program was integrated into the curriculum of computer engineering.

The HP-UX program is designed to enable Mapua students to specialize in Hewlett-Packard's proprietary implementation of the Unix operating system in order to get globally recognized professional certifications.

Hewlett-Packard handed over recently one HP Integrity rx2620 server for technology courses in Mapua's HP Unix laboratory.

Book drive addresses shortage in schools

SM FOUNDATION'S DONATE-A-Book Program has collected over two million books since 1998. Most were donated shoppers, institutions of learning and book publishing companies.

The books were distributed to some 10,000 public elementary and high schools, provincial and barangay libraries as well as day care centers.

Last year for instance, the books went to 419 day care centers, 1,080 elementary schools, 603 high schools and nine libraries.

Taytay, Rizal topped the beneficiaries with books going to 20 day care centers, 80 elementary and 25 high schools. Other major beneficiaries were Muntinlupa, Cavite; Tiaong, Laguna; Pulupandan, Negros Occidental; Davao del Sur; Baguio; Bilaang, Ilocos Province; Infanta, Bacolor, and Lal-lo, Cagayan.

Libraries in Sta. Cruz, Laguna; Cavite; Cagayan de Oro City; Iponan at Apan's, Padre Garcia, Pandan, Lipa, Batg. 171, Caloocan, and the National Training School for Boys got encyclopedia sets and encrusted magazines.

Other school beneficiaries were in Bacolod City, Antique, Bulacan, Laguna, Pampanga, Davao del Sur, Cagayan de Oro City, Cebu, Pangasinan, Pinat, Iloilo, Batangas, Ilocos, Camarines Sur, Bicolor, Capiz, Aklan, La Union, Catanduan, Kalinga, Benguet, and Ilocos Norte.

SM Foundation partners in the project are Sen. Bulen Fernandez, Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government units and media organizations.

SM Foundation's Donate-A-Book project has been with its goal to help improve the quality of education by addressing the problem of book shortage in public school libraries and develop reading skills through public reading centers.

DONATE-A-Book aims to help ease the book shortage in schools and public libraries.

New MCU president named

THE MANILA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY (MCU) Board of Trustees has appointed Aristotle T. Maliksan, Ph.D., as the fourth president of MCU.

The appointment of the new president coincides with the celebration of the university's 15th anniversary.

Maliksan was an active vice president and chief operating officer and vice president for academic affairs prior to his appointment. He finished his doctoral studies in education, major in educational leadership and management, at De La Salle University and received a gold medal and recognition for graduating with high distinction. He completed a Master in Management program at the Asian Institute of Management.

Maliksan received a Doctor in Humanities degree from MCU after completing high school and grade school in San Beda College in 1951.

Oreta at opening of Singapore-affiliated school

FORMER SENATOR TEOFISTA Aquino Oreta will be the guest of honor and speaker at the blessing and inauguration of the Julia Gabriel Center for Learning Manila (JGLM) on March 20, 10 a.m., Jolmin Malolos Street and Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City.

The new school is the Philippine affiliate of the Singapore-based Julia Gabriel Center for Learning founded by Dr Ruth Gabriel. It offers an early education program using a curriculum developed by Gabriel that emphasizes the teaching of language and communication skills to enhance self-expression in young children.

Also attending the event are Bataan governor Enrique Garcia and his wife Lilia, Pampanga governor Eduardo Panlilio and his wife Mylene, Tarlac governor Victor Yap and his wife Jocelyn, Nueva Ecija governor Tomas Joson III and his wife Czarina, Zambales governor Hermogenes Ebdane and his wife Cheryl,

The 3 Rs: Recharge, refresh, review

By Roxanne L. Llenado
Contributor

THE COLLEGE Admissions Test (CAT) season does not start until August, it is not too early to start reviewing as soon as school is out.

The CAT is one of the most important tests in a student's life if the target destination is a major university in the country.

Board and bar examinations may be taken a few times, giving a person a better chance of passing after the first try. But a CAT given by any of the top colleges and universities may be taken only once. There are no second chances.

Of the 100,000 who apply every year for admission to the top three universities—Ateneo de Manila University, De la Salle University and the University of the Philippines (in alphabetical order)—only 16 percent pass. The remaining 60 percent comprise only 600,000 other students to get into other colleges.

Parents may want to raise their college-bound children for two reasons: they can closely monitor their kids' progress, and it will save them money. But many of them soon realize they are not knowledgeable enough to all subjects (e.g., algebra, physics). Also, not all parents have flexible work schedules, so their chauffeur does not coincide with their kids' free time.

Entrance exams cover a wide range of topics—mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry); science (natural science, chemistry, physics); languages (English 1–4, reading comprehension, and grammar); and other subjects such as history, geography, current events, arts, abstract and logical reasoning, and essay writing.

Students who try to review on their own can max out cover all subjects in two months. They can read all relevant books and notes and still end up ill-prepared. They can surely use some help.

In shopping for a CAT review center, there are 10 questions you should ask to help you make the right choice.

1 Does the review center have a solid foundation and a proven track record? How long a review center has been operating and its reputation are important.

The reviews center should also have a passers' list every year that shows how many students it assisted made it on the top three universities that give very difficult entrance exams.

2 Does it have a rule-based review program? A rote-based review program is patterned after specific college entrance tests and designed to give students appropriate preparation for a certain exam. It allows students to focus on the things that will be taken up in the exam, enhancing ease of time and effort studying irrelevant topics.

3 Does the review program develop learning by doing? This is based on Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience Theory: "Research shows that people retain 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 50 percent of what they do."

4 Does the review center give specialized diagnostic test for students before they enroll at the start of the review and what they need to do to improve their standing.

5 Does it give simulated tests? Simulated tests are the closest experience a student will get to the actual exams. These are designed based on the topics, questions, level of difficulty, and time limits of real entrance tests.

6 Does it use well-researched materials? Quality educational materials are the result of years of research and planning. They ensure that students have access to the best references.

7 Does it employ high caliber teachers and lecturers who finished at the top-one percent of their classes? They must be young, dynamic, and able to relate well to students.

8 Does it employ review assistants? Current must-be-entrants always have a only-one review center will review assistants. Hiring former students of the review center, they understand the pressures and difficulties of reviewing for college entrance tests. They are mentors and discipline students.

9 Does it hold special orientation seminars for parents and students? The orientation must provide a greater understanding of the importance of college entrance exams, a deeper insight on the top universities, and tips before, during, and after the review.

10 Does it offer scholar courses? The scholar course are only "self-tutor" the students' minds, as helps them could topics taken up in their review classes, it should also foster their confidence and inspire them.

The author is managing director of Ahead Tutorial & Review Center that offers tutorial and review services for college exam with branches in Binondo, Greenhills, Robinsons Galleria, Makati, Alabang, and Dagupan. Visit www.theahead.com, or call 6360034-36.

Can you retake a college entrance exam?

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT pass the CAT or major university may not retake the test.

This is the policy at the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, De la Salle University, the Institute of Technology, Mapúa Institute of Technology, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, University of Asia and the Pacific, University of Santo Tomas and De La Salle University of the East.

However, students who fail the CAT may be considered for admission (on some of the aforementioned universities depending on their exam scores, high school grades and the available slots for their course of choice.

A student may submit an appeal for reconsideration to the admission offices of said universities.

In a few rare cases, a student may take the CAT again after a year, but must not enroll in another university while waiting for the next CAT so as to retain his/her incoming freshman status.

Students may also enroll in another university then re-apply after a year in their first school of choice as transferees. But they will have to comply with a new set of requirements, such as a specific number of units taken, grades, and/or qualifying exams for the course of choice.

—Inquirer Research

UE draws up plan to help Manila's poor

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE GUZMAN DE LA UNIVERSITY of the East (UE) has drawn up a "social action plan" for indigent women and children to help alleviate poverty in Manila.

Dr. Rose Garcia, UE president and dean academic affairs, said the institution relied on "expert resources in the faculty and staff and the fresh ideas and caring hearts and minds of our students" in developing the community outreach program.

Under the supervision of the Office of Extension and Community Outreach and National Training Service Program (OECOS/NTP), UE freshmen will work with city authorities and the communities in finding ways to help ease the suffering of Manila residents, especially women and children.

Garcia announced the program at the second Lucrecia de Parco Memorial Lecture Series at the UE auditorium hall. The theme of the lecture was "Poverty Alleviation: How Can I Help?"

The series was launched in December 2007 in honor of the late Supreme Court justice and UE alumna Lucrecia de Parco, whose husband, Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, was inaugural speaker.

UE essay-writing contest 1st placer Gemmalyn Prinz and 2nd placer Sarah Angeli Fontanilla (2nd & 1st from left) with other contest winners, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and UE president Rose Garcia

Graduation requirement

Under the new program, first year students will have to participate in the two-semester community outreach initiative starting in June, as a requirement for graduation.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim said the program was "just wrong the private sector can recognize social, economic and environmental aspects in their activities."

A UE alumnus himself, Lim said "in today's global economic difficulties, unity and cooperation by all sectors is important to make Manila overcome problems and, at the same time, make it a clean and comfortable home for all of us."

The mayor said, "Every citizen, department and bureau of government cannot working hand in hand" and added "we will find creative ways to survive and thrive".

Lim expected the lecture series to inspire ideas on how to cope with bad times.

UE faculty members and students joined the staff of the Manila social welfare office in a round-table discussion on the real plight of some Manila residents.

Dr. John Bala, dean of the UE graduate school, called the subject "the poor man's secret(ly)" and cited its relative in holding discussions on poverty and finding ways to alleviate the problem.

He said education was not only important in reducing poverty but was also key to wealth creation.

Garcia and Lim awarded certificates of recognition to winners of UE's essay-writing contest, which also had poverty alleviation as theme.

Gemmalyn Prinz, 20, a sophomore BS Secondary Education student, placed first. Second was Sarah Angeli Fontanilla of the College of Education, and third was Katherine Cleo of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Other finalists were Johanna Viloria, Allen Montaño, Bernard Martinez, Leslie Ann Dino, and Maricris Angelo Evangelista, all from the Arts & Sciences; and Joan Santiago and Eden Rose Gonzaga, both from Business Administration.

In her winning piece, Prinz wrote: "Many a time I had viewed poverty as specific to slumped kids in the cold streets, beggars, skyrocketing unemployment rates, shabby thatched shacks and illiteracy... But then, looking closely at the problem, how can one help others without even making a closer inspection and telling yourself how blessed you are? These various personal poverty issues are like pieces to a jigsaw puzzle: they help us see the bigger picture."

The Great Bacon native said "the key to alleviating poverty is frugality, practicality and resourcefulness of the rich and middle class. Then the rest will follow."

WE'RE SOARING, WE'RE FLYING! The Black Melody band of Liceo de Bay performed the song "Disconnection Motor" by Pupil Band at a school battle of the bands to win first prize. Members of the band, who are in third year high school, St. Scholastica section, include (from left) Jake Ann Ricardo on bass guitar; Wilson Harry Manzanares on drums, Bill Clinton Rivera on lead guitar, Jemma Dorado on vocals and Kevin Mabaso on rhythm guitar.

CLASS ACT

College dance groups to compete March 21

TWENTY COLLEGE PERFORMING groups will compete in the Nike Dance Battle 6 p.m. March 21, at the 6-storey Events Hall, Makati City.

The competition is part of Nike's commitment to help women stay fit and active.

The Nike Dance Battle will stage features a collection of genres specially designed for today's active woman, just before the Nike Home Series.

Competing in the dance floor are dance groups from Lyceum of the Philippines University, Ateneo de Manila University, Mapúa Institute of Technology, De La Salle University, La Consolacion College, San Juan de Letran College, University of the Philippines Manila, Perpetual Help University, National University, San Sebastian College, University of Santo Tomas, Trinity University of Asia and Central Colleges of the Philippines.

Log on to www.nikewomen.com.ph to create customized shoes for the teams.

RP joins robotics tilt

THE PHILIPPINES IS SENDING a team of students and mentors from the University of the Philippines, De la Salle University and Philippine Science High School to the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Hawaii Regional on March 20-28.

The 51-member Team Legaldale will bring their robot Larry Labuyo. FIRST stands for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, a United States-based organization founded by inventor Dean Kamen in 1989. The winner in the competition will get the Chairman's Award. Ateneo Informatics Institute (AII) director Dr. Peter B. Digres expressed optimism the Philippines will win an award.